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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Items 20 (f) and 50 of the provisional agenda*
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN
THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 20 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Tashkent Declaration on Fundamental Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan, adopted at the meeting of the six plus two group at Tashkent on 19 July 1999 at the Deputy Minister level (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, under items 20 (f) and 50 of the preliminary agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alisher VOHIDOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/54/150.

Annex

[Original: English and Russian]

Tashkent Declaration on Fundamental Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict in Afghanistan

The Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the «Six plus Two» group, composed of the States bordering on Afghanistan — the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan — as well as the Russian Federation and the United States of America, having met in Tashkent on July 19, 1999 with the participation of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, having considered the situation in Afghanistan, being sincere friends of the Afghan people and desiring peace and prosperity for Afghanistan, have confirmed the following principles.

We express the profound concern of our Governments at the continuing military confrontation in Afghanistan, which is posing a serious and growing threat to regional and international peace and security.

We remain committed to a peaceful political settlement of the Afghan conflict, in accordance with relevant provisions of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations, and we, in particular, recall the «talking points» and the «points of common understanding», adopted earlier by the countries of the «Six plus Two» group (A/52/826-S/1998/222, annex, and A/53/455-S/1998/913, annex, respectively).

We confirm that the United Nations, as a universally recognized intermediary, must continue to play a central and impartial role in international efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict and we reaffirm our full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and the work of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

We reaffirm our firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan.

We express our profound concern at the violations of the human rights, including those of ethnic minorities and women and girls, as well as the violations of international humanitarian law that are taking place in Afghanistan.

We are deeply distressed with the steady increase in the cultivation, production and illicit trafficking of narcotics and the illegal sale of arms, which have far-reaching unfavorable consequences not only for the region but beyond it as well.

We are also concerned at the use of Afghan territory, especially areas controlled by the Taliban, to conceal and train terrorists, and the fact that dangerous consequences of such actions can be seen in Afghanistan, its neighboring countries and far beyond their borders.

In view of the foregoing, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. We are convinced that there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict, which must be settled through peaceful political negotiation in order to establish a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government.

2. Accordingly, we urge the Afghan parties to resume political negotiations aimed at achieving these goals.

3. In order to help bring about a cessation of hostilities, which we consider essential, we have further agreed not to provide military support to any Afghan party and to prevent the use of our territories for such purposes. We call upon the international community to take identical measures to prevent delivery of weapons to Afghanistan.

4. We express our readiness to promote direct negotiation, under the auspices of the United Nations, between the Afghan parties in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations and this Declaration in order to conclude an intra-Afghan agreement on the implementation of paragraph 1, set forth above. As members the "Six plus Two" group, we are fully determined to provide our individual and collective support to this process.

5. We consider that the negotiation process must be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and may consist of two stages.

   (a) The main objective of the first stage is to adopt measures for building mutual confidence. Such measures will include:

(i) The singing of an agreement on an immediate and unconditional ceasefire without any pre-conditions;

(ii) The holding at this stage of direct negotiations between the plenipotentiary delegations of the two main parties to the conflict - the United Front and the Taliban movement - in order to reach agreements, *inter alia* on:

- Exchanging of prisoners of war,

- Lifting internal blockades and opening roads for reciprocal trade and delivery of humanitarian assistance in the territories controlled by the various Afghan groups;

(b) The main objective of the second stage is for the Afghans themselves to draw up basic principles for the future State structure of Afghanistan and the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government within a short period of time.

6. Those of us, who have a common border with Afghanistan, moved by a common desire to take effective and coordinated measures to combat illicit drug-trafficking, have agreed, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, to strengthen effective and coordinated measures to combat illicit drug-trafficking. In this connection, we recall and confirm the important role played by the United Nations Drug Control Programme in this process.

7. We urge the Taliban to inform the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations about the results of their investigations into the killings of the diplomatic and consular staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Masar-e-Sharif and the correspondent of the Islamic Republic News Agency, and appeal to the Taliban to cooperate fully with the international investigation into their killing in order to punish the guilty parties.

8. We urge the Afghan parties, particularly the Taliban, to cease providing refuge and training to international terrorists and their organizations and to cooperate with the efforts to bring terrorists to justice.

9. We are fully determined to make every effort to encourage the Afghan parties to respect fully the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Afghans in accordance with the basic norms of international law.

10. We are prepared to cooperate with the new Afghan Government that is to be established in accordance with paragraph 1, set fourth above, in all aspects in order to strengthen security and stability in Afghanistan and the region, bring about the return the Afghan refugees to their homes and ensure speediest rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan through support from UN agencies and programmes, international financial organizations and donor countries.

11. We call upon the international community to respond to the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Assistance for Afghanistan, launched by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1999, bearing in mind also the existence of the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund. Support for demining is of particular importance.

12. We call upon the international community to support these proposals and take coordinated steps to bring about a speedy settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan and also call upon all forces in Afghanistan to demonstrate political will and wisdom, overcome their differences and mutual hostility and not miss an historic opportunity to achieve stable and long-lasting peace.

13. The present Declaration is established in two originals, in the English and the Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

DONE in the City of Tashkent, the Republic of Uzbekistan, this « 19th » day of the month of July one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

United Nations A/54/175

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Fifty-fourth session
Items 12, 98, 102 and 105 of the provisional agenda*

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Macroeconomic policy questions

Operational activities for development

Globalization and interdependence

Letter dated 9 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the joint communiqué of the Group of Fifteen, adopted on the occasion of the Ninth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 10 to 12 February 1999 (see annex).

I would highly appreciate it if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under items 12, 98, 102 and 105 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Diane **Quarless**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/54/150.

99-21566 (E) 270799

Annex

Joint communiqué of the Group of Fifteen, adopted at the Ninth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen, held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 10 to 12 February 1999

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen, meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 10-12 February 1999 for our Ninth Summit, reaffirm our solidarity, and our commitment to promoting growth, employment and general welfare. We recognize that only through a "community of interests" between developed and developing countries that this can be achieved, and so shape a just and equitable global economy.

2. An overview of the world economy, at the end of this decade and century, points to the need for a more equitable share in the gains from the processes of globalization and liberalization. We must therefore identify and build convergences on those complex issues relating to the social and economic impact of globalization, and through a high level dialogue and viable partnerships, meet the challenges facing the international community.

3. We remain committed to market-based policies. Equally, we recognize that for the effective functioning of the market economy, governments must necessarily play a strong and effective role in the development and management of institutions, systems and infrastructure. The great leaps in scientific discovery and technological application in all spheres of human endeavour, especially in the information, communication and health fields, if ethically directed, hold even greater promise of raising living standards across continents. To fully reap the benefits from these discoveries and innovations, developed and developing countries should place greater emphasis on and increase their collaboration in the fields of science and technology.

4. The most recent projections and scenarios for growth, development and distribution of benefits require our most urgent attention. The systemic impact of the financial crisis, high levels of structural unemployment, widening income gaps within and among countries, and the threat of a resurgent protectionism have led to slower growth. In the most affected countries, the crisis is increasing poverty and generally, social instability.

5. In concert with developing countries, and other members of the international community, we approach the next Summit in Egypt in the year 2000 confident that with timely and appropriate multilateral action, prospects for the world economy will be improved.

6. We have a better appreciation and understanding of the causes, consequences and corrective measures required to deal with the still unfolding international financial crisis. The present crisis has brought into focus the risks associated with speculative short-term capital flows, the harmful effects of which have disproportionately fallen on the developing countries, especially on the poor and vulnerable. The injection of liquidity both in international financial markets and through new financing mechanisms in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, increased resources for social programmes, and the development of regional financial instruments, are positive but need to be enhanced. We call on the IMF and World Bank, while responding to the liquidity needs of the most seriously affected countries, to ensure that their mandates are adequately discharged in providing the necessary support to redress current account imbalances and provide long-term development financing.

7. We support those measures which have been taken to increase transparency and accountability; strengthen national financial systems, including prudential supervision; and for the improvement of a multilateral approach to monitoring and management of the international financial crisis. We note the slow pace at which progress is being made in reforming the international financial system and urge that concrete steps need to be taken to develop *inter alia* the following:

- mechanisms and adequate rules to monitor and supervise the operations of large financial market players, including hedge funds and currency speculators. These should provide governments with an international framework of principles to act as an early warning system, for the adoption of appropriate policy responses;
- greater coherence between the World Trade Organization (WTO) and relevant international monetary and financial institutions, respecting their mandates, confidentiality requirements and the necessary autonomy in decision-making procedures of each institution, and avoiding the imposition of additional or cross conditionalities;
- the inclusion of social safety nets as integral parts of development policies and programmes, at both the micro and macro - levels, ensuring that they meet the basic needs of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population, and also safe-guarding the "human capital" of workers whose jobs are at risk.

8. These supportive and constructive responses demonstrate our "community of interests". They are clearly not sufficient as the reverberations of the crisis continue to be felt in all parts of the world. The international community must therefore continue to pursue the reforms energetically. There must be institutional reform, more democratic, transparent and accountable to its members, and a redesign of the policy frameworks, more appropriate to national circumstances. We welcome the ongoing consideration of steps to strengthen the international financial

architecture, with a view to restoring stability and predictability in international financial markets. The Interim and Development Committees of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, among others, constitute key institutional mechanisms to carry through the reforms of a systemic nature. Additionally, the opening of the capital account must be carried out in an orderly, gradual and well-sequenced manner, at a pace consistent with the strengthening of countries' abilities to manage any unforeseen and unintended consequences.

9. The efforts in managing the crisis in the immediate term and the initiatives to reform the international financial system in the longer term, need to recognize and take into account that the global economy comprises countries with diverse backgrounds. We therefore emphasize the need for both the developed and developing world to have a voice in this process. An international consultative process needs to be established to ensure that the reform architecture of the international financial system accommodates these differences. In addition, the regime and approach for crisis response should have a degree of flexibility to differentiate between and take into account the viability of alternative options depending on the particular country circumstances. The G-15 represents an important group that can and must contribute towards achieving this objective.

10. The international community's focus on systemic issues must be balanced also by urgent attention to those developing countries, particularly in Africa, who have little or no access to private capital markets, and where Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other concessional flows are critical to achieving their development objectives. The international community must therefore move expeditiously beyond the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative by assisting them to achieve meaningful reductions in both the stock of debt and its servicing - bilateral, multilateral, official and commercial. We welcome recent initiatives on debt forgiveness for the poorest developing countries by the Presidency of the European Union and the G-7, which need to be implemented speedily, to give real hope to the world's poorest countries.

11. We are deeply concerned at the structural factors which have led to significant falls in prices across all commodity sectors. The international financial crisis which has constrained aggregate world demand and impacted on the terms of trade of commodity exporters has exacerbated the situation. We urge the developed countries to join with us in the appropriate international institutions to adopt remedial measures as part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to restart growth and development.

12. We agree that international trade in general, and particularly the expansion of exports from developing countries, would be facilitated by the reduction of trade restrictive measures, the dampening of excessive volatility, particularly of exchange rates, the avoidance of sudden reversals of short-term capital flows and disruption to trade credits. We are convinced that to stave off any threat of world economic recession, countries must resist the pressures for protectionism and markets must remain open, foreign direct investment must be increased and access to capital

markets, both private and concessional must be available to developing countries on safe and predictable terms.

13. The severe and serious social consequences of the financial crisis have manifested themselves in dramatic reversals of job creation and increased levels of poverty. At the global level, despite increases in productivity, innovation and enterprise the absolute numbers of those living in poverty have increased, and in some countries, this scourge remains deepiy entrenched. We underscore the urgency in dealing with their immediate needs and indeed call on the international community to give this the highest priority, not only on moral and ethical grounds, but as a means for ensuring international peace and stability. We support the renewed awareness by the Bretton Woods institutions in addressing longer-term structural aspects of social policy and productive employment in the context of market opening. The commitments taken at the historic World Summit for Social Development invite all people in all countries, and in all walks of life, as well as the international community to join in our common cause to alleviate poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

14. We note with satisfaction that the ILO is undertaking an in-depth analysis of the negative social repercussions of the financial crisis with a view to formulating the necessary responses. We call upon the ILO to launch a comprehensive employment strategy during the ILO Governing Body and Conference at ministerial level later this year. We will collaborate with all social partners in the ILO tripartite framework, to achieve this objective. An employment strategy, including the right to work should strengthen our respect for internationally recognized Fundamental ILO Conventions on workers rights.

15. We commit to, and urge all members of the international community to implement the commitments of the several United Nations (UN) World Conferences, High-level meetings and Summits. We commit ourselves further, to work towards the success of the several Summits and UN Conferences to be held in the year 2000, including the South Summit in Havana, the UN Conference on Financing for Development and the UN Millennium Summit in New York, and UNCTAD X in Bangkok.

16. We reaffirm the importance of a transparent, fair and equitable rules-based multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, effectively integrating all countries and leading to the realization of the objectives of "raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand, and expanding trade in goods and services". To this end, we reiterate again, that unilateral measures with extra-territorial effects are incompatible with the multilateral trading system and threatens to undermine it.

17. We agree to continue our participation in the WTO, in the implementation of its current work programme and the ongoing discussions and consultations leading up to the Third Ministerial Conference later this year, when we will join in deciding on its future work programme, including further liberalization sufficiently broad-based to respond to the concerns and interests of developing countries. We

will consult with our trading partners in the WTO, as the preparatory process unfolds, keeping the following principles in mind, *inter alia*:

- the legitimacy of the development objectives of developing countries and, consequently, the need to preserve economic spaces within the multilateral trading system to implement market-oriented development policies, as well as the need for the full implementation of the special and differential provisions in all spheres provided for in the Agreements, as deliberated at the recent G-15 Symposium on Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Countries in the Uruguay Round Agreements;
- the importance of redressing the difficulties faced by developing countries in the implementation of the WTO Agreements to enable them to participate more effectively in the multilateral trading system;
- the lack of implementation or non-fulfillment of obligations of the Uruguay Round Agreements by developed countries can not be used by them as bargaining instruments for obtaining further concessions from developing countries.

18. We note the negotiations on accession in the WTO, and the agreement to review progress. In light of our commitment to the early accession of developing countries, we agree that their terms of accession should be in accordance with the WTO Agreements, including the special and differential provisions.

19. We urge the full implementation of the measures agreed at the WTO High-level Meeting for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the work programme being elaborated to integrate small economies into the multilateral trading system. We also encourage the increased cooperation between the WTO and UNCTAD, to strengthen the institutional capacities of developing countries and thereby enabling them to participate more effectively in negotiations and maximizing benefits from the multilateral trading system.

20. Labour standards shall continue to be set and dealt with within the ILO. We reaffirm our opposition to its inclusion in the WTO work programme. The label "trade-related" shall not be used as a pretext for the establishment of standards in one institution and their enforcement in the WTO or any other institutional framework.

21. The relationship between trade and environment is an important and complex issue that requires further analysis. We support the ongoing analytical work on clarifying the relationship between trade and environment in several institutions. This work should continue. We oppose the use of trade measures for achieving environmental objectives and vice versa, and disguised protectionist measures by developed countries on the grounds of "multifunctionality" in trade sectors.

22. We welcome India's offer to host a meeting of G-15 countries, at an appropriate level, in preparation for the Third WTO Ministerial Conference. We welcome the further proposals taken to strengthen cooperation among developing countries, particularly the projects being implemented among G-15 countries. We

agree, under the coordination of Mexico, to intensify G-15 cooperation in science and technology, and to establish effective and self-sustaining research and development mechanisms. We endorse the proposal made by India to evolve a new strategic sectors approach for South-South Cooperation, focusing on bio-technology, information technology and infrastructure development. We welcome also the new project proposed by Jamaica for G-15 collaboration on environmental and nuclear sciences. These projects like all G-15 projects, will continue to be open to all developing countries. We note with satisfaction the recently concluded Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) among several members of the G-15. We commit ourselves to assisting those G-15 and other developing countries most vulnerable to natural disasters, other geographical constraints and external shocks.

23. We discussed the threat posed by terrorism to peace and stability at national, regional and international levels. Terrorist acts undermine political and territorial integrity of countries, destroy social fabric and disrupt democratic institutions. They also undermine economic growth and development. We therefore, strongly condemn all kinds of terrorism, their perpetrators and all those who support them under whatever guise. We call for enhanced regional and international cooperation to prevent and combat this menace, and call upon all States to become parties to multilateral conventions for the elimination of specific acts of terrorism in accordance with the applicable Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. We also call for the urgent conclusion and the effective implementation of a comprehensive international convention for combating terrorism.

24. We welcome the initiation of the official level dialogue between the Chairman of G-15 and the Presidency of the G-8. We believe this is a positive step at this opportune moment which appears conducive to such a dialogue and which gives effect to the recognized "community of interests". We look forward to the continuation and deepening of dialogue and constructive collaboration at all levels on the priority issues on the international economic agenda.

25. We welcome Sri Lanka as the seventeenth member of the Group of Fifteen, convinced that it will contribute greatly to furthering the achievement of our objectives and future work.

26. We express our deepest appreciation to Jamaica for its able and effective leadership of our Group during its Chairmanship. We thank the people and the Government of Jamaica for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements that they have provided for the successful holding of the Ninth Summit of the Group of Fifteen. This Ninth G-15 Summit, before the millennium, has allowed us to take stock of our past cooperation and to renew our commitment to continued cooperation in the 21st century.

27. We welcome with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to host the Tenth Summit in the year 2000 and look forward to meeting once again in Cairo. We welcome also the offer by the Government of Indonesia to host the Eleventh Summit in the year 2001.

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Pattern of conferences

Provision of interpretation services to other locations from permanent interpretation structures in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Continuous remote simultaneous interpretation during a typical session of an intergovernmental body is a viable alternative to on-site servicing, provided that certain technical, financial and human resources conditions are met. Technical requirements have been sufficiently defined. The financial viability of remote interpretation and its human resource implications, however, have not been established with certainty and further research is needed.

* A/54/150

99-21572 (E) 300799

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 A of 18 December 1998, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, without prejudice to the practices currently used to meet interpretation requirements, to examine the provision of interpretation services to other locations from permanent interpretation structures based in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. In order to meet the request of the Assembly, the information and experience available in the field of remote interpretation has been gathered and is presented in part II of the present document. In part III, the financial aspects of remote interpretation are explored, taking into account the equipment and communications requirements of good quality remote interpretation.

II. Activities undertaken so far in the field of remote interpretation

2. The basic technical feasibility of remote interpretation was established in the course of three experiments conducted between 1976 and 1982, during the nineteenth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Nairobi, 1976), the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (Buenos Aires, 1978) and the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (Vienna, 1982). The three experiments used costly satellite links and lasted only a few hours. As long as resort to expensive satellite communications was required, remote interpretation was not considered a financially viable proposition. The introduction of high-capacity digital telephone lines (the integrated services digital network, or ISDN) brought about a significant lowering of communications costs and prompted consideration of remote interpretation as a possible means of increasing cost-effectiveness in the use of staff resources and improving the actual utilization of physical meetings facilities in different conference centres.

3. In order to move beyond the limited nature of earlier experiments and to reach meaningful conclusions, a comprehensive feasibility study of large-scale remote interpretation, conducted in a concerted fashion by the interpretation services at Headquarters and the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, was needed. The study had to cover the impact of new technology on the quality of services and the working conditions of staff, to deal with a wide range of interpreting situations and to cover a longer period of time than past experiments.

4. To this end, it was decided that a full two-week session, held at one of the established United Nations conference centres, would be serviced using remote interpretation provided from another centre. This would constitute the first experiment ever conducted on such a large scale and in conditions under which interpreters would be required to work in complete isolation from the reality of the event for which they would be interpreting. The experiment would test the reliability of the technology and determine the cumulative effect of remote interpretation on the work of the interpreters and other conference servicing staff, as well as on participants at the meeting.

5. The idea of using Headquarters as either the receiver or provider of the remote services was discarded because the time difference was considered an unnecessary complication in the context of the experiment. In view of the advisability of increasing the use of conference rooms at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the possibility of the remote servicing of a meeting to be held there was considered but could not be pursued because there are no ISDN services to Nairobi. This left the combination of the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. It was decided that Vienna would service a meeting taking place at Geneva, and not the reverse, because the permanent interpretation establishment at Geneva was large enough to provide for almost immediate back-up in case of a communications or other technical failure.

6. It was assumed that not all meetings would lend themselves equally well to remote interpretation. Highly structured meetings, with little or no spontaneous interaction among participants, such as general debates, would be best suited for remote interpretation. The opposite would be the case of meetings with constant interaction, such as small discussion and drafting groups. The meeting chosen for the experiment should ideally offer a wide variety of interpreting situations along this continuum. It also had to use all six official languages in order to test relays between languages and to assess the effects of remote interpretation on participants using different languages.

7. Considering these factors and the availability of interpretation staff at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna, the session of the Working Group on a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which was held at Geneva from 25 January to 5 February 1999, was identified as a suitable meeting for the implementation of the

experiment, conducted with the participation of interpretation staff from all three duty stations. The experiment was observed by members of the relevant services of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as by representatives of the International Association of Conference Interpreters and the University of Vienna.

8. The minimum technical requirements for good quality remote interpretation and the resulting general technical set-up used for the experiment are described in paragraphs 17 and 18 below. In addition to the information provided there, mention must be made of the fact that the United Nations Office at Vienna endeavoured to replicate, at the remote location, the conditions of on-site servicing, in particular to ensure the prompt transmission to interpreters of all new documents as soon as they became available to participants. Staff referred to as "remote interpretation assistants" in the context of the experiment worked from a booth contiguous to the remote interpreters' booths where equipment had been installed providing access to phone, facsimile and computer services, thus ensuring voice and data communications between the servicing site and the venue of the meeting. Documents originating in Geneva were received promptly and were photocopied and distributed to the interpreters.

9. Visual information was transmitted to the remote interpreters by means of two identical videoconferencing systems and was projected onto large screens. One projector provided a permanent view of the meeting room with a view of the presiding officer blended into one quadrant. The other projector received images from one of two cameras, which were switched, under operator control, to provide the best possible view of the speakers. The use of video monitors in the interpreters' booths was discarded because they produce fan noise and heat.

10. At Geneva, the interpretation coming from Vienna was fed into the conference room sound distribution system. Additionally, the system had a feature to accommodate speakers who listened to their headsets while speaking. If the sound had been sent to Vienna, from where it would have been retransmitted back to Geneva, the speaker would have heard himself with a 0.5 seconds delay. A relay system bypassed this loop. The substantive secretariat of the meeting and the participants cooperated fully.

11. The session of the Working Group was held without any disruptions, with interpretation provided at all times by the team of interpreters working at Vienna. The Working Group held 17 out of the 20 meetings programmed. With the exception of the three cancellations and some late starts, the session followed established schedules, with no requests for additional meetings. Its proceedings were mostly unstructured, with long periods of time devoted to drafting work and recesses. The meetings were easier to interpret than the average meeting. At the end of the session, participants were asked to answer a questionnaire on the interpretation services provided. Thirty-three replies were received. The quality of the sound was judged the same as that provided at on-site servicing by 75 per cent of the respondents, worse by 22 per cent and better by 3 per cent. The quality of the interpretations was rated the same as on-site servicing by 94 per cent of the respondents and worse by 6 per cent. The absence of interpreters from the conference room did not bother 84 per cent of the respondents and bothered 16 per cent.

12. Extensive information was gathered from the interpreters who worked during the experiment on the physical conditions of their work (sound and image transmissions, camera operation, screen placement, services of support staff), as well as personal conditions (stress, concentration, fatigue, motivation, perceived quality of one's own work, alienation from the conference room and the meeting location). In order to track patterns along the session and to detect any cumulative effects, interpreters completed questionnaires at the end of each meeting and one more general questionnaire at the end of the session. Analysis of the data indicated that the replies were consistent and provided reliable information pointing to increased stress and fatigue and less satisfaction with one's own performance.

13. The conclusions derived from the experiment are summarized in the following paragraphs. The experiment has shown that, during a continuous period of two weeks, meetings held at one location were successfully serviced by interpreters, technicians and meeting room personnel located at a remote location, without disruptions to the participants and to their nearly complete satisfaction. It has been established that sound of a quality very close to the standard requirements for simultaneous interpretation can be reliably transmitted using the required number of ISDN links. Some of the adjustments that need to be made to the organizational arrangements and, in particular, to the functions and working environment of meeting room attendants at the interpreting site are now better understood, pointing to the need for support personnel with adequate skills in the use of telecommunications and computer equipment.

14. Findings concerning the nature of the meetings most suitable for remote servicing remain inconclusive. Contrary to what had been assumed, unstructured debates did seem to lend themselves to remote interpretation. During the experiment, however, there were no heated exchanges and few opportunities to cope with fine shades of meaning and precise choice of words. In addition, there were few statements in Arabic and Chinese, and many interpreters did not have the experience of working in relay. There were no last minute changes to the schedule of meetings and no additional, standby or night meetings were requested. Therefore, it cannot be said that the full range of interpreting situations were tested.

15. The experiment highlighted the differences in the physical working environment for interpreters between remote and on-site interpretation. Quality of sound was considered good and new documents were received very promptly. Interpreters were very appreciative of the close-up view of the speakers provided by the video transmissions, which enhanced their understanding of the speaker's meaning. On the other hand, interpreters had no control of the images other than those of the speakers that were projected and they tended to lose concentration when certain views of the room were selected for them by a camera operator at a time not of their choosing. In general, the video component of remote interpretation requires further refinement.

16. In their comments, the interpreters emphasized that they were able to maintain performance at acceptable levels, but at a higher psychological and physiological cost. Remote interpretation over a two-week period has a cumulative effect on health, pointing to stress, fatigue, eyestrain, loss of concentration, lack of motivation and overall anxiety, but the experiment did not measure these variables, which would have required medical expertise. Further information needs to be gathered in this connection. Since it could be argued that if the video component of the experiment had been as successfully implemented as the sound component the health impact could have been less significant, in future experiments both sound and image must be the best that available technology can offer.

III. Financial and technical issues and forthcoming activities

17. In order to get a very general picture of the comparative cost-effectiveness of each servicing modality, certain assumptions and highly approximate estimates have been made. The general principles are that: (a) in order to be both financially viable and of sufficient quality for simultaneous interpretation, communications for remote interpretation require the use of ISDN lines for the transmission of both audio and video; and (b) under the International Standards Organization standards applicable to simultaneous interpretation equipment, the minimum sound bandwidth acceptable for interpretation purposes is 12.5 kHz. The communications requirements specified below are based on these general principles and are identical to the arrangements in place during the experiment described in part II above.

18. The floor sound should be transmitted to the remote interpreters using a bandwidth of 20 kHz by means of an ISDN codec in high quality compression mode. The interpretations are transmitted back to the participants in the meeting via two ISDN codes but using less bandwidth. Two Picture Tel videoconferencing systems are used to transmit visual information from the conference room to the remote interpreters. This requires the use of 10 128 kbps ISDN lines altogether — each of the two video channels uses three lines, and each of the three voice codecs uses one line, plus one spare line.

19. It is customary for sessions of intergovernmental bodies and conferences to last two weeks. Although actual meeting time varies from case to case, it is assumed that during a two-week period, 20 meetings of three hours each are held. A three-hour meeting requires a three-and-a-half-hour connection to allow for checking before the actual opening of the meeting. This typical session, therefore, would require ISDN links for a total of 4,200 minutes.

20. ISDN rates vary widely. For one 64 kbps line, average rates for communications originating in the United States of America with 48 countries currently range from US$ 0.23 to $1.95 per minute. Therefore, depending on location, the cost of 10 128 kbps lines for 4,200 minutes, which is the link that a typical session or conference would require, can range from $19,320 to $163,800. The communications costs during the experiment conducted earlier this year between Geneva and Vienna amounted to about $23,500. Since 17 meetings were held, assuming the need for a 210-minute connection for each, the unit cost was roughly $0.33 per minute.

21. On-site servicing of a two-week session or conference comprising 20 meetings would require the presence of 20 interpreters and, for the purpose of this comparison, it is assumed that they are not available at the meetings location. Travel and terminal expenses and daily subsistence allowances (DSA) would also vary considerably depending on the location of the conference as well as the place of recruitment of freelance staff specifically for the meetings

in question or the duty station where regular staff might be available.

22. It is assumed that the established offices most likely to be involved in any possible combination of remote servicing arrangements are the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and at Nairobi (see para. 27 below). As indicated in the June 1999 DSA circular issued by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC/CIRC/DSA/289), current DSA rates are $170 in Vienna, $184 in Geneva and $188 in Nairobi, the average of these three amounts being $181. The team of 20 interpreters travelling to service a two-week conference would be paid allowances over a period of at least 13 days and, if the average of $181 is used, total expenditures on this account would amount to at least $47,060.

23. A comparison limited exclusively to DSA costs and ISDN costs, therefore, would indicate that, for a two-week conference using six languages at a location where no interpreters were available, remote interpretation could become cost-effective roughly if ISDN rates were under the level of $0.56 per minute for one 64 kbps line, that is $47,060 - 84,000 (4,200 minutes x 2 x 10 lines). Current information for communications originating in the United States indicates that international ISDN rates are lower than $0.56 per minute in 19 countries (Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan and 15 countries in Europe) out of a group of 48 countries for which information was obtained. As a rule, communications originating in countries in Europe would be more expensive than in the United States. It may be of interest to note that, on the basis of this very limited comparison, the remote servicing from New York of meetings held in Jamaica would be more expensive than on-site servicing with non-local interpreters, since the current DSA for Jamaica is $155, with an ISDN rate of $0.85.

24. These are obviously crude comparisons. Since it is impossible to make assumptions about many servicing requirements, this oversimplification assumes that any other costs impacting either one of the terms of the equation would balance each other out. Any savings in interpreters' travel expenses, for example, would be counterbalanced by additional costs, such as camera operators' salaries, the salary of assistants at the remote site providing interpreters with the help that they receive from conference room staff normally available when working on-site, facsimile costs for the transmission to interpreters of documents originating at the conference site, telephone traffic between the meeting and the remote interpreters and perhaps a number of incidentals impossible to foresee.

25. As a matter of fact, it is not likely that a definite statement can be made in the near future about the general comparative cost-effectiveness of each servicing modality. Costs will vary depending on the combination of sites being considered, the number of languages and the length of the conference, three items than can impact greatly on the relevance of "fixed" costs like travel. Far from having any cost advantages, remote interpretation would evidently be an expensive proposition — unless there are unutilized interpreters at the meetings location — if it is decided that the risk of interruptions in the normal conduct of meetings as a result of communications failures should be avoided completely and on-site interpretation redundancy is essential.

26. This last item points to a crucial factor in the present discussion. In a global situation characterized by the limited availability of interpreters at peak periods during the year and by staffing arrangements based on the premise that permanent resources should be provided at a level lower than overall yearly demand, with routine recourse to temporary staff not always available locally even at well-established servicing sites, the cost-effectiveness of remote interpretation would depend basically on a higher degree of harmonization of the calendar of meetings at different duty stations. So far, the meetings requirements of international organizations have not made this possible. Another variable can be equally relevant. If remote interpretation proves more stressful for interpreters than on-site servicing, as indicated by the experiment described in part II of the present report, a reduction in normally expected workloads or a greater rotation of interpreters may need to be envisaged, with more staff becoming necessary than for on-site servicing.

27. In view of these considerations and given present circumstances, if remote interpretation is adopted, the United Nations Office at Geneva should perhaps be considered the most likely provider of services. The pool of interpreters available locally is greater in Geneva than in any other established conference centre, a situation that will most likely also prevail in the future. Furthermore, "vacant" meeting rooms with existing interpretation booths that could be used for remote servicing are available in Geneva. Conversely, at Headquarters, the pool of local staff is more limited and there are practically no meeting rooms unutilized, except during a few weeks around the year. Additionally, time differences make remote interpretation between Africa or Europe and North America more problematic and possibly more expensive, if staff or contractual technical personnel entitled to overtime payments need to work outside normal hours. The United Nations Office at Vienna has only one interpretation team,

which is incomplete, and has vacancies that have been impossible to fill. For the United Nations Office at Vienna to become a cost-effective provider of remote interpretation services, its staff resources would have to be strengthened and their adequate utilization would then have to be ensured. The United Nations Office at Nairobi does not have interpretation services and meetings held there are serviced by non-local interpreters. It could become a prime recipient of remote interpretation services, but Nairobi is not ISDN-connected.

28. The Mercure satellite available to the United Nations Office at Nairobi can perhaps be used to emulate ISDN communications. Preliminary investigations conducted from Vienna, however, indicate that technical obstacles remain to be overcome. In view of these circumstances, and seeking to gather more information on all aspects of the question of remote interpretation in the technical, financial and human resources fields, it has been provisionally decided to organize another experiment, as comprehensive as the one conducted earlier this year, but now entailing the servicing from Geneva of a two-week meeting to be held at Nairobi as early as possible in 2000. A determination will need to be made, however, of the suitability of Mercure-based communications for remote interpretation.

IV. Conclusions

29. Recent interest in remote simultaneous interpretation of intergovernmental meetings involving large number of participants has been prompted by several factors, including the need to ascertain whether more cost-effective alternatives to current methods of work exist, the attempt to improve the utilization of existing conference centres in certain locations, the use of remote servicing techniques in related conference-servicing activities, including videoconferencing, and the advent of new low-cost communications links. The amount of experience and knowledge in the field, however, is still quite limited, not allowing even for estimations of the relative cost advantages of remote versus on-site interpretation beyond ad hoc cases.

30. Inter-agency contacts indicate that interest in remote simultaneous interpretation is shared by all international organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system. Remote interpretation, however, has not been adopted or tested on a sufficiently large scale by any of them. The United Nations is the only organization that has conducted an experiment on the use of remote simultaneous interpretation from two different countries and covering more than isolated meetings, or sessions spanning two or three days. The results of the experiment have been very promising in some aspects. In others, they have underlined deficiencies in the arrangements used for remote servicing so far. In still others, they have been inconclusive and have pointed to the need for further research.

31. Another experiment should be conducted in order to build on the results achieved by the experiment that took place early in 1999 and to gather missing information on relevant technical, financial and human resources issues. It should encompass the remote servicing of a full-scale intergovernmental meeting, with six languages, preferably to be held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, where existing conference facilities are underutilized. It is intended to conduct this experiment as early as possible in 2000.

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United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Presentation of the Fund

1. The present annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981, by which the General Assembly established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

2. A description of the mandate and administration of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture is contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session (A/52/387, paras. 7–11). A description of the activities of the Fund during its first decade of operation, from 1982 to 1992, is available in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/520).

3. In administering the Fund through the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretary-General relies on the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Fund. The Chairman of the Board is Jaap Walkate (Netherlands); the other members are Ribot Hatono (Japan), Elizabeth Odio-Benito (Costa Rica), Ivan Tosevski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Amos Wako (Kenya).

4. A brief description of the grant approval cycle will explain how the Fund operates. Grant requests should be submitted by 31 December for consideration by the Fund secretariat. Admissible grant requests are reviewed by the Board of Trustees at its annual session in May. The Board's recommendations are submitted for approval to the High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General. Grants are paid out in July/August. The recipients must submit by 31 December satisfactory narrative and financial reports on the use of the grants. No new grant requests can be considered before satisfactory reports on the use of previous grants have been received.

II. Contributions and pledges

5. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals. In order to allow enough time for responding to the requests for financing received before 31 December each year, and in accordance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution 53/139 of 9 December 1998, contributions should be made to the Fund well before the annual session of the Board of Trustees, to be duly recorded and made available by the time of the session. Any contribution recorded after that date is counted towards the following year. Pledges are not counted if payment was not received before the first day of the Board session.

A. Payment of contributions

1. Trends in the number of States contributing to the Fund

6. The number of States contributing to the Fund has increased from 5 at the 1982 session of the Board to 35 in 1999.

7. Subsequent to the Secretary-General's previous report to the General Assembly (A/53/283), 32 Governments made voluntary contributions to the Fund between 1 August 1998 and 2 July 1999, as indicated in table 1.

Table 1
Government contributions from 1 August 1998 to 2 July 1999[a]

Government	*Contribution (in United States dollars)*	*Year announced*	*Contribution number*
Algeria	5 000	1999	7
	5 000	1999	8
Andorra	5 000	1998	4
Belgium	82 109	1998	9
Canada	15 487	1999	16
Chile	10 000	1998	7
Czech Republic	3 000	1998	4
Finland	181 901	1999	17
France	83 333	1998	20
	81 416	1999	21
Greece	10 300	1999	16
Iceland	5 550	1999	13
Ireland	66 600	1998	14
Israel	5 000	1999	4
Italy	89 989	1998	10
Japan	66 000	1998	13
Liechtenstein	7 092	1999	11
Luxembourg	21 378	1998	15
	12 949	1999	16
Malta	1 500	1999	5
Mauritius	3 000	1999	2
Monaco	10 582	1999	6
Nepal	1 000	1998	2
Norway	64 117	1999	14
Peru	1 500	1999	2
Philippines	6 250	1998	3
Portugal	15 000	1998	3
	15 000	1999	4
South Africa	22 766	1999	4
Slovenia[b]	2 825	1998	1
Spain	50 327	1998	13
Sweden	379 747	1998	12
Switzerland	54 744	1998	11
	41 666	1999	12
Turkey	5 000	1999	1
United Kingdom	642	1999	11
United States of America	600 000	1998	17
	300 000	1997	18
	300 000	1999	19

[a] According to the information available to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[b] A contribution from the Government of Slovenia of 2,825 dollars was officially received by the financial services of the United Nations at Geneva on 6 August 1998. The confirmation of receipt was sent to the Government on 20 October 1998. The amount will be added to the Fund in the near future.

2. Contributions from non-governmental organizations and private individuals

8. Three individual donors contributed to the Fund for the first time: Ms. C. Krebs ($50), Mr. H. I. Jamieson ($70) and an anonymous donor ($3,731). Ms. R. Maran regularly maintains her contribution to the Fund ($30).

3. Contributions received in time for allocation at the eighteenth session

9. In accordance with paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 53/139 and with the wishes of the Commission on Human Rights and the Board of Trustees of the Fund, only those contributions actually paid and officially recorded by the Treasurer of the United Nations before the first day of the annual session of the Board are taken into account by the Board for grant allocations.

10. Table 2 lists the contributions received in time for allocation at the eighteenth session of the Board, between 11 May 1998 and 16 May 1999.

Table 2
Contributions received in time for allocation at the eighteenth session

Donor	*Amount (in United States dollars)*
Algeria	10 000
Andorra	5 000
Australia	60 620
Belgium	82 109
Canada	15 487
Chile	10 000
Czech Republic	3 000
Finland	181 901
France	164 749
Germany	112 359
Greece	10 300
Iceland	11 137
Ireland	66 600
Israel	5 000
Italy	453 921
Japan	66 000
Kenya	1 000
Liechtenstein	7 092
Luxembourg	21 378
Malta	1 500
Mauritius	3 000
Monaco	10 582
Nepal	1 000
New Zealand	15 555
Norway	197 759
Peru	3 000
Philippines	6 250
Portugal	15 000
Republic of Korea	15 000
South Africa	22 766

Donor	*Amount (in United States dollars)*
Spain	50 327
Sweden	379 747
Switzerland	96 410
Turkey	5 000
United Kingdom	642
United States of America	3 900 000
Mr. Jamieson	70
Ms. Krebs	50
Ms. Maran	30
International Commission of Jurists (Netherlands section)	5 080
Anonymous	3 731
Total	**6 020 152**

B. Pledges

11. Government pledges to the Fund are made directly to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, or during the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities in New York, which usually takes place each year during the first week of November; they may also be made at the annual session of the Commission on Human Rights at Geneva.

12. The following pledges remain outstanding as at 2 July 1999:

State	*United States dollars*
Brazil	30 000
Denmark	308 166
Luxembourg	14 706
Netherlands	537 634
New Zealand	15 957
Philippines	6 345
Tunisia	2 000
United Kingdom	216 666

C. How to make a contribution to the Fund

13. To contribute to the Fund by bank transfer, in all cases, specify: "payee: United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, account CH", and pay to: "United Nations Geneva General Fund" c/o Société de banque suisse, B.P. 2770, CH-1211 Genève 2, either in Swiss francs to account number 240–CO–590–160.0, Swift address: UBSWCHZH12A, or in United States dollars c/o Chase Manhattan Bank, N.Y., A/C: 001–1–508629, UNOG General Fund, G/L: UN–0503456, U.S. Banking Code: 021000021.

14. It is also possible to contribute to the Fund by check payable to "United Nations" addressed to: Trésorerie, Nations Unies, Palais des Nations, CH–1211 Genève 10, or to: Treasury, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States of America.

III. Funds available for allocation at the eighteenth session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund

15. The Board of Trustees of the Fund held its eighteenth session at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 17 to 28 May 1999. In accordance with the rules governing the Voluntary Fund, 15 per cent of estimated annual expenditures must be earmarked as a reserve for the following year, and 13 per cent is the rate set for programme support costs. After reserve and support costs were deducted from the total contributions received in time for allocation, the total amount available on 17 May 1999 came to approximately US$ 5,100,000.

IV. Disbursements

Recommendations of the Board of Trustees at its eighteenth session

16. The Board of Trustees made programme grant recommendations for all available funds, i.e. $5,100,000, of which $100,000 was for emergency grants to individuals between the annual sessions of the Board of Trustees and $200,000 for urgent grants to organizations which could face financial difficulties because of delayed payment of grants from the European Commission. These emergency grants to organizations will be treated in accordance with the relevant guidelines for the Fund which have already been approved by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

Methods of work

17. The guidelines for submission of requests for project financing (selection criteria, types of requests received, urgent grants and others) are found in the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fiftieth and forty-eighth sessions (A/50/512, chap. IV, and A/48/520, annex I, summary by the Secretary-General of 10 years of activities).

Decisions of the Fund secretariat

18. On 11 June 1999, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General, approved the Board's recommendations on grants to 133 projects submitted by 117 humanitarian organizations in 53 countries. Paragraph 21 below lists the organizations that authorized the Fund secretariat to mention the awarding of a grant in 1999. During its eighteenth session, the Board of Trustees heard, in closed session, representatives of seven organizations. Despite the small number of regular donor States (38 out of 187 potential donors), the Board made an effort to honour every request for funding that met the selection criteria by awarding 40 to 60 per cent of the budget requested, or sometimes more, according to the cost of the treatment offered and the number of victims assisted.

19. From the establishment of the Fund until 28 May 1999, 317 files for requests for financing have been started by the Fund secretariat (the same organization may submit several projects, which may also generate a number of sub-projects).

20. At the end of its eighteenth session, the Board of Trustees held an information briefing with representatives of interested donor States to discuss its work and recommendations. A press release (see annex III) was issued on 23 June 1999 after the adoption of the Board's recommendations by the High Commissioner in time for release to the public on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

21. The following organizations received grants on the recommendation of the Board at its eighteenth session and authorized the Fund to announce its support: Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo (Argentina), ACAT (Association des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture (Mexico), ACTV (African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims) (Uganda), Aid for Children in Crisis (South Africa), AMECON (Africa War Victims Medical Concern) (Uganda), Amigos de los Sobrevivientes (United States), ASTT (Advocates for Survivors of Trauma and Torture) (United States), ATYHA (Instituto de Alternativas en Psicologia) (Paraguay), AVRE (Association pour les victimes de la répression en exil) (Paris), Balay Rehabilitation Centre (Philippines), Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (Canada), CAPSDH-Burundi (Commission africaine des promoteurs de la santé et des droits de l'homme) (Bujumbura), CAPSDH-Ghana (Accra), CAPSDH-Guinea (Conakry), CAPSDH-Rwanda (Kigali), CARITAS (Cologne), CCVT (Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture) (Toronto), CDHES (Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador) (San Salvador), CEDAVIDA (Fundación Social Colombiana (Bogotá), CEFPRODHAC (Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos) (Cereso de Reynosa, Mexico), CEJIL (Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional) (Washington, D.C.), Centre d'acceuil et de soins Primo Levi (Paris), Centre for Justice and Accountability (United States), Centre for Multicultural Human Services (United States), Centre for Rehabilitation of War And Torture (Sweden), Centre for the Treatment of Torture Victims (Berlin), Centre for the Treatment of Torture Victims – Ulm (Germany), Centro Alternativas (Santiago), CINTRAS (Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos) (Santiago), CODESEDH (Comité para la Defensa de la Salud, la Ética Profesional y los Derechos Humanos) (Buenos Aires), COMEDE (Comité médical pour les exilés) (Paris), COMISEDH (Comisión de Derechos Humanos) (Lima), Coordinador Nacional de Derechos Humanos (Lima), C3RJ (Consulting Centre for Constitutional Rights and Justice) (Nigeria), Cordelia Foundation (Budapest), CVT (Centre for Victims of Torture) (United States), CVT (Katmandu), Doctors of the World (New York), EATIP (Equipo Argentino de Trabajo y Investigacion Psicosocial) (Buenos Aires), Edmonton Centre for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (Canada), EXIL (Centre medico-psychosocial pour refugies et victimes de la torture) (Brussels), FASIC (Fundacion de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas (Santiago), FIND (Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearances Welfare) (Philippines), FRC (Family Rehabilitation Centre) (Colombo), Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (Gaza), HAMOKED (Centre for the Defence of the Individual) (Jerusalem), HEMAYAT (Vienna), Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (Ankara), ICAR Foundation (Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture) (Romania), International Society for Health and Human Rights (London), IRCT (International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims) (Copenhagen), IRCT-Zagreb, Italian Refugee Council (Rome), Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights (Rawalpindi and Kashmir), Justice pour Tazmamart (Paris), Khmer Health Advocates (United States), Khulmani Support Group (South Africa), LAPPH (Ligue des anciens prisonniers politiques haïtiens, des amis et parents de disparus) (Port-au-Prince), LRCT (Lahore Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Survivors (Pakistan), MAG (Medical Action Group) (Manila), Marjorie Kovler Centre for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture (United States), MEDH (Movimiento Ecuménico por los Derechos Humanos) (Buenos Aires), Medical Foundation (Kampala), Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (London), MRT (Estonian Center of Medical Rehabilitation for Victims of Torture) (Tartu), NIDEREF (Niger Delta Environment and Relief Foundation) (Port Harcourt, Nigeria), OMCT (Organisation mondiale contre la torture) (Geneva), Omega Health Care Centre (Austria), ONDH (Organisation nationale des droits de l'homme) (Dakar), Ottawa-Carlton Immigrant Services Organization (Canada), PCATI (Public Committee Against Torture in Israel) (Jerusalem), POC Fund (Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund) (London), PRAWA (Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action) (Lagos), Program for Torture

Victims (United States), Projecto Adelande (United States), RCTV (Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (Greece), RCVTE (Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture in Ethiopia) (Addis Ababa), RCVV (Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Violence) (Nairobi), Red de Apoyo pcr la Justicia y de la Paz (Caracas), The Redress Trust (London), Refugio-Bremen (Germany), Refugio-Munich (Germany), RIVO (Réseau d'intervention auprès des personnes ayant subi la violence organisée) (Canada), Rocky Mountain Survivors Center (United States), Rwandan Women Community Development Network (Kigali), Sach Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (Pakistan), SERSOC (Social Rehabilitation Service) (Montevideo), SMRC (Latvia Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims and their Families) (Riga), SOPROP (Solidarité pour la promotion sociale et la paix, section française pour l'Europe) (Democratic Republic of the Congo), SOTI (Survivors of Torture, International) (United States), SRC (Swedish Red Cross) (Sweden), Survivors International (United States), Swiss Red Cross (Bern), TOHAV Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (Istanbul), Tortura Nunca Mais (Rio de Janeiro), Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture (South Africa), Trauma Centre in Yaoundé (Cameroon), Tripoli Centre (Lebanon), TRUSTT (Australia), Unité de médecine des voyages et des migrations (Geneva), VAST (Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture) (Canada), VAT (Voice Against Torture) (Islamabad), Victim Services Inc. (United States), XENION (Berlin), ZEBRA (Zentrum zur sozialmedizinischen, rechtlichen und kulturellen Betreuung von Ausländern und Ausländerinnen) (Austria). The Fund also gave financial support to 14 other humanitarian organizations that provide medical, psychological and social assistance or train health professionals in 1999.

V. Anticipated requirements for the year 2000

22. The demand for assistance to torture victims is constantly increasing. Over $5 million were requested from the Fund in 1996 for 96 projects and sub-projects. In 1998, $6.8 million were requested for 118 projects. In 1999, $8.2 million were requested for 139 projects. The difference between the amount available for grants and the amount requested from the Fund in 1999 was over $3 million dollars.

23. If demand continues to rise, about $10 million in contributions must be received before May 2000 to meet the need in full.

24. The next session of the Board of Trustees will take place from 15 to 26 May 2000 at Geneva.

VI. Fund-raising

25. In its resolution 36/151, by which it established the Fund, the General Assembly authorized the Board of Trustees to promote and solicit contributions and pledges. It also requested the Secretary-General to give the Board of Trustees all the assistance it might require and appealed to all Governments to respond favourably to requests for contributions to the Fund.

26. In keeping with the programme of work it outlined in decision 48/431 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly adopts resolutions concerning the Fund in even years. Resolution 53/139 is the latest one it has adopted on the matter. The Assembly, in this resolution, and the Commission on Human Rights, in resolution 1999/32 of 26 April 1999, appealed to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to respond

favourably to requests for contributions to the Fund, if possible on a regular basis and annually before the meeting of the Board of Trustees and, if possible, with a substantial increase in the level of contributions, so that consideration may be given to the increasing demand for assistance. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution on the Fund in December 2000, at its fifty-fifth session, following the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees.

27. The Board of Trustees greatly appreciated that the High Commissioner for Human Rights had sent a letter on 9 October 1998 inviting States which had never contributed to the Fund to do so for the first time and a letter to States that were regular contributors inviting them to increase their support. On the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of the Fund, the High Commissioner agreed to launch an appeal to donors in autumn 1999 to make their contributions in time, i.e. before May 2000, for the nineteenth session of the Board.

VII. United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June

28. In its resolution 52/149 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly proclaimed 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On that occasion, the Committee Against Torture, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights adopted a joint declaration (see annexes I and II). To celebrate the Day, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights organized an exhibition of works by torture victims at the Palais des Nations from 21 June to 1 July and at Palais Wilson, headquarters of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, from 6 to 16 July 1999. The exhibition included around 100 paintings, posters, drawings, photographs, sculptures and embroideries sent to the Fund secretariat by some 30 organizations that have assisted such victims and their families with the financial support of the Fund (see annex IV).

29. An observance was also organized at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and many events were held around the world to celebrate the Day.

VIII. Conclusions

30. The Fund's support is vital for the organizations concerned, because sources of funding for assistance to victims of torture are limited, while more requests for such assistance are submitted each year. Ever-increasing financial support is needed. Donors wishing to contribute to the Fund are requested to refer to paragraphs 13 and 14 above for information on modalities of payment; for further information, they may also consult the Fund secretariat, through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. By contributing to the Fund, States demonstrate their commitment to combating torture and their solidarity with the victims, enabling the latter to receive medical, psychological, psychiatric, financial, social, legal or humanitarian assistance and to resume a normal life. According to information available to the Office of the High Commissioner, assistance granted by the Fund in 1998 made it possible to help approximately 60,000 victims of torture throughout the world.

Annex I

Joint Declaration on the occasion of United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 1999

[Original: English]

The Committee against Torture, the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Recalling the decision of the General Assembly to declare 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture,

Recalling the appeals against torture of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in which, *inter alia*, all Governments were exhorted to defeat torture and torturers everywhere and reminded that ending torture was a beginning of true respect for the most basic of all human rights: the intrinsic dignity and value of each individual,

Recalling also the Joint Declaration that they adopted on 26 June 1998,

Reaffirming that torture is one of the vilest acts to be perpetrated by human beings upon each other,

Concerned that requests for assistance for victims of torture are constantly increasing,

Recalling that torture is prohibited by article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as by specific provisions of international human rights treaties adhered to by the majority of the States,

Recognizing that torture is a breach of a non-derogable human right which cannot be justified under any circumstances and that its systematic or widespread practice is characterized as a crime against humanity under international law, in particular, by article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,

Conscious of the necessity to place emphasis on prevention of torture, as recommended by the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993,

Welcoming the organization of the VIII International Symposium on Torture as a Challenge to the Health, Legal and Other Professions, to be held in New Delhi from 22 to 25 September 1999,

Acknowledging the valuable work of Governments, associations, groups and individuals in contributing to the effective elimination of all forms of torture,

Paying tribute to all those who work selflessly to relieve the suffering and assist the recovery of torture victims around the world,

1. Decide to renew their appeal to prevent and prohibit torture on the occasion of the United Nations Day in Support of Victims of Torture of 26 June 1999, and to this end,

2. Urge all States to become parties to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment without reservation, if they have not already done so,

3. Urge States parties to the Convention that have not yet accepted its optional provisions to do so as soon as possible,

4. Call for the early adoption of the optional protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,

5. Urge all States to become parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17 July 1998, as a matter of priority,

6. Urge all States to ensure that torture is a crime in their domestic law and to rigorously pursue perpetrators whenever the act was committed and bring them to justice,

7. Urge all States to provide for compensation and rehabilitation of the victims of torture in their domestic law,

8. Appeal to all Governments, organizations and individuals to contribute generously to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, if possible on a regular basis, keeping in mind the increasing demand for medical, psychological, social, humanitarian and legal assistance to victims of torture and members of their families worldwide,

9. Urge all States to cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture in fulfilling his mandate,

10. Consider that, by these means, the crime of torture may be effectively prosecuted and condemned all

over the world and that impunity of torturers, no matter what is their status, will no longer be tolerated,

11. Call upon all Governments, other United Nations bodies, programmes, funds and agencies, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to commemorate, on 26 June, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Annex II

United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, to be observed on 26 June

Press release issued at Headquarters on 24 June 1999

[Original: English]

The second United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture will be observed on 26 June. The Day, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 12 December 1997, aims at eliminating torture and ensuring the application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

Underlining United Nations efforts to combat torture, the four main actors of the United Nations engaged in the fight against torture adopted a joint declaration against this year urging all States to ratify the Convention against Torture without reservations. In the declaration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee against Torture, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture and the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture also urged all States parties to the Convention which had not yet accepted the treaty's optional provisions to do so as soon as possible, so that individuals who claim to be victims of a violation of the rights protected by the Convention can submit complaints for consideration by the Committee which monitors its implementation.

The joint declaration calls upon all States to ensure that torture is considered a crime in their domestic law and to rigorously pursue perpetrators. It also urges States to become parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a matter of priority. Under article 7 of the Rome Statute, torture is one of the acts constituting a "crime against humanity" when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack. Also, according to article 8 of the Statute, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments, is one of the acts constituting a "war crime".

In addition, all States are urged to provide for compensation and rehabilitation of victims of torture in their domestic law and to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture as fully and as often as they can. The declaration adds that all States should cooperate with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture on fulfilling his mandate when requested to do so.

Since its creation, the United Nations has worked to eradicate torture. In 1984, the General Assembly adopted the Convention against Torture, which obliges States parties to make torture a crime and to prosecute and punish those guilty of it. It notes explicitly that neither higher orders nor exceptional circumstances can justify torture.

As of June 1999, the Convention has been ratified by 114 States. These States parties are required to report to the Committee against Torture, a human rights treaty body set up in 1987 to monitor compliance with the Convention and to assist States parties in implementing its provisions.

The Committee is composed of 10 experts who serve in their personal capacity and are elected by States parties.

The Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur on torture also plays a key role in the international fight against torture by requesting Governments to submit information regarding alleged cases of torture and other forms of ill-treatment that he receives from various sources, including individuals, and by reporting to the Commission. In 1998, the Special Rapporteur — Sir Nigel Rodley, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland — transmitted 122 urgent appeals to 41 countries on behalf of persons whose physical/mental integrity was reportedly at risk, as well as 64 letters to 59 countries on behalf of hundreds of alleged victims of torture.

Torture is one of the most profound human rights abuses, taking a terrible toll on millions of individuals and their families. Rape, blows to the soles of the feet, suffocation in water, burns, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, shaking and beating are commonly used by torturers to break down an individual's personality. As terrible as the physical wounds are, the psychological and emotional scars are usually the most devastating and the most difficult to repair. Many torture survivors suffer recurring nightmares and flashbacks. They withdraw from family, school and work and feel a loss of trust.

Thirty years ago there were no treatment centres or services to treat torture survivors. Today, there are some 200 centres or programmes all over the world. There is now profound knowledge of torture methods, the effects of torture and how to diagnose and rehabilitate torture victims.

Over 100 programmes treating torture victims in more than 50 countries, from the United States to Nepal, receive funding from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which was established in 1981.

From 1983 to July 1998, the Fund financed 300 projects, including those providing medical, psychological, legal, social, financial, humanitarian or other assistance to victims of torture and members of their families, as well as projects for training for health, social, psychological and other professionals working directly with victims of torture. In 1998, the Fund received applications for financial support totalling $6.8 million, but only $4.2 million was granted owing to insufficient donations. This year, the Fund received requests for grants in the total amount of more than $8 million. Some $5.1 million will be granted to organizations supporting victims of torture.

As part of the commemoration of the Day, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Copenhagen-based International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims are organizing an exhibit in the public lobby of the General Assembly building, which will run until the beginning of August. The panel exhibit, which includes paintings and children's drawings, was inaugurated last year and describes the history and ongoing prevalence of torture, United Nations documents and mechanisms for combating torture, consequences of torture, rehabilitation and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

Annex III

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approves grants to organizations supporting victims of torture

Press release issued at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 23 June 1999

[Original: English]

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson has approved, on behalf of the Secretary-General, grants amounting to $5.1 million to organizations supporting victims of torture.

These grants were recommended by the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture at its eighteenth session which was held in Geneva from 17 to 28 May 1999.

The Board had received requests for grants which came to more than $8 million.

Grants were allocated to about 130 organizations providing medical, psychiatric, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian or other assistance to victims of torture and members of their families from all over the world.

The Board also recommended grants to organize training for health professionals, social workers, psychologists and other professionals.

It has been estimated that about 60,000 victims and members of their families were assisted in 1997 through the support of the Fund.

As compared with 1998, the Board noticed an increase of more than $1 million in requests for grants for 1999. However, following appeals made by the High Commissioner and then by the General Assembly (resolution 53/139), several donor Governments increased the level of contributions paid, so that consideration might be given to the increasing demand for assistance. The main donor to the Fund in 1998, the United States, doubled its contribution which amounted to $3 million this year.

In order to take into consideration the increasing demand for assistance, it has been estimated that applications for new grants for the year 2000, amounting to $10 million, should be received by the deadline of 31 December 1999. New voluntary contributions should also be received before the next session of the Board of Trustees in May 2000.

Detailed information will be available in the Secretary-General's annual report on the Fund to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (last report A/53/283).

Pending publication of the above-mentioned report, for any details, please contact the Fund's secretariat at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Support Services Branch, Trust Fund Unit, telephone (41.22) 917.93.15, fax (41.22) 917.90.7, e-mail: dpremont.hchr@unog.ch.

Annex IV

Works of art by torture victims to be exhibited on the occasion of International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Press release issued at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 18 June 1999

[Original: English]

In commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 52/149 of 12 December 1997, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are organizing an exhibition of works of art created by victims of torture.

The exhibition will be held at the Palais des Nations from Monday, 21 June, to Thursday, 1 July. The works will also be shown at the Palais Wilson from Tuesday, 6 July, to Friday, 16 July.

The exhibition is made up of 135 works of art by torture victims from around the world, gathered by 32 organizations which work in 27 countries. These organizations are financed through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture which provides medical, psychological, social, juridical and humanitarian aid to victims of torture or members of their families.

The paintings, sculptures and tapestries were created, on the most part, during sessions of artistic therapy which are organized within the framework of the rehabilitation of the victims and represent a way to express the suffering endured or to show the positive effects of therapy.

At the Palais des Nations, the exhibition will be held at the Salle des Pas Perdus. The Palais Wilson, which is the seat of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is at 52 Pâquis street, Geneva.

United Nations A/54/178

General Assembly

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27 July 1999

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 39 of the provisional agenda*
Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Letter dated 19 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a "Code of Democratic Conduct", which was recently finalized within the framework of the follow-up mechanism of the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, which was held in Bucharest, from 2 to 4 September 1997 (see annex).

As an acting chair of the Conference, oriented towards setting up concrete measures to support Governments in the process of democratization, Romania committed itself, during the ministerial level meeting of the follow-up mechanism, held in New York on 22 September 1998, to work for the drafting of such a "Code".

The final text represents the result of a collective effort undertaken in a spirit of openness and cooperation, by representatives of Governments and United Nations bodies, as well as by academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

The provisions of the Code, stemming from the political document adopted by the Third Conference, as well as from other internationally accepted documents, aims at recommending a basic set of norms of democratic conduct for Governments in the exercise of power (free, fair and competitive elections, separation of powers, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, strengthening the rule of law and appliance of practices of good governance, increasing participation of civil society in the development of democracy, creating an economic environment favourable to democracy and enhancing social cohesion and solidarity, etc).

We are willing to promote the "Code of Democratic Conduct" during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly as a contribution to the affirmation of a "democratic culture", capable of bringing United Nations peoples closer, on the eve of the twenty-first century.

* A/54/150

99-21890 (E) 290799

Therefore, I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 39 of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Ion **Gorita**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Annex

Code of Democratic Conduct

The General Assembly

I. Recalling the provisions of the United Nations Charter concerning the achievement of international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion;

II. Bearing in mind the indissoluble links between the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the foundations of any democratic society;

III. Noting that all societies are faced with complex emerging issues in an era of globalization and interdependence;

IV. Reaffirming its commitment to the process of democratization of societies, and acknowledging the relationship of interdependence and mutual reinforcement that exists between democracy and development;

V. Sharing a commitment to democracy and personal freedom that favours the enjoyment of national sovereignty and development;

VI. Aware of the imperative need to better involve civil society in the decision-making process that affects the life of people;

VII. Commending the commitments and recommendations approved by the countries that participated in the Conferences of New and Restored Democracies (Manila 1998, Managua 1994, Bucharest 1997);

VIII. Encouraged by the wish of the respective countries to devote their energy, means and political will to the building of a world where citizens have the opportunity to shape their own destiny;

IX. Recognizing that:

i. A democratic system of government is essential for the fulfilment of the political, economic and social aspirations of all the peoples around the world;

ii. Free and fair elections as well as separation of powers among the legislative, the executive and the judicial bodies are minimum requirements of any democratic society;

iii. Democracy, good governance and participation are of crucial importance for the conduct of governments in service to their peoples;

iv. Protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms are the first responsibility of governments.

X. Determined to:

i. Maximize participation by the citizenry in public affairs;

ii. Improve transparency of institutions and policy-making procedures;

iii. Enhance the accountability of public officials.

XI. Mindful of the need to agree upon a basic set of democratic norms in the exercise of power by governments;

Decides upon the following Code of Democratic Conduct, by which Member States are called upon to:

1. Consolidate democracy through the promotion of pluralism, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, maximizing the participation of citizens in decision-making and the development of competent public institutions, including an independent judiciary, responsible legislature and public service and an electoral system that ensures free and fair elections.

2. Promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the dignity and worth of the human being continuously, by:

(a) Protecting the freedom of speech, the independence of the mass media and freedom of assembly;

(b) Providing equal access to justice through the rule of law and protection of fundamental civil and political rights;

(c) Developing peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms in order to eliminate the use of violence as a way of solving disputes;

(d) Developing institutional support and comprehensive strategies for preventing and solving inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions;

(e) Ensuring and respecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and indigenous people in connection with their needs;

(f) Ensuring and respecting the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including children, women and the elderly, and persons with physical or mental disabilities;

(g) Providing special human rights training for civil servants, police forces and the military;

(h) Acceding and adhering to international instruments on human rights;

(i) Promoting the principle of gender equality, within the national programmes and policies, in view of the equality between men and women in public and private life.

3. Develop an electoral system that consistently ensures free, fair and competitive elections, in particular by:

(a) Respecting the equality of all citizens before the law and guaranteeing the right to elect their political leaders at regular intervals, according to their own interests and will;

(b) Taking measures to improve the representation of citizens through electoral mechanisms;

(c) Promoting legislation, institutions and mechanisms for encouraging the formation of political parties and their practice of internal democracy;

(d) Allowing campaigns to receive public financing and electoral costs to be transparent;

(e) Allowing also small parties and independent candidates to participate in elections;

(f) Providing credibility in the sustainability of the electoral process;

(g) Assuring that obstacles to full public participation will not occur;

(h) Guaranteeing free and equitable access to the media.

4. Strengthen the rule of law by:

(a) Providing equal protection of laws to all persons;

(b) Guaranteeing equality of application of laws to all persons;

(c) Improving continuously the efficiency of the judiciary and its capacity to render justice independently from the executive and legislative;

(d) Assuring high quality in judicial selection and adequate funding of judicial personnel and facilities;

(e) Further developing civil laws to assure reliability for persons and organizations;

(f) Applying fair procedures and treatment in the criminal justice system.

5. Strengthen democracy through the practices of efficient governance and promote sustainable human development, by:

(a) Taking legal, administrative and political measures against corruption;

(b) Solving conflicts within countries, in a participatory spirit and with full respect for domestic and international law;

(c) Enhancing, by means of legislation, institutions and mechanisms, the accountability of public officials;

(d) Bringing government closer to the people by promoting appropriate levels of decentralization and giving local authorities the power to effectively govern at local level, while strictly observing the constitution and the law;

(e) Disseminating and ensuring public access to information about the activities of the national and local authorities as a means to hold public officials accountable;

(f) Offering training and engaging in process of continuous improvement of the civil service to assure high levels of competence, ethics, professionalism and cooperation with the public;

(g) Developing and strengthening civic education to create broad awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizens, including at school levels;

(h) Ensuring access by all to administrative remedies on the basis of equality as well as respect for administrative decisions both by state bodies and representatives of public authority and by each member of society;

(i) Assuring that implementation of tax legislation is efficiently and fairly administered and making recommendations for more effective legislation.

6. Create and improve the legal framework and necessary mechanisms for institutionalizing the participation of the civil society in the development of democracy, by:

(a) Respecting the diversity of society, by promoting associations, dialogue structures, mass media and their interactions, as a means of strengthening and developing democracy;

(b) Fostering, through education and other vehicles of culture, a democratic way of life;

(c) Encouraging citizens to organize themselves into associations committed to enforce check and balances of arbitrary exercise of power, when necessary;

(d) Guaranteeing mechanisms for the involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process;

(e) Providing or improving the legal framework in relation to the recognition of non-governmental, community-based and other civil society organizations;

(f) Developing cooperation between local authorities and non-governmental organizations;

(g) Allowing active civic education by organizations, in the spirit of democracy, responsible citizenry and tolerance.

7. Create an economic environment favourable to democracy, by:

(a) Undertaking appropriate reforms in order to meet the legitimate social and economic expectations of the population;

(b) Taking effective measures meant to gradually bridge the gap between the poor and the rich and alleviate poverty;

(c) Promoting economic freedom, encouraging entrepreneurship and simplification of administrative procedures;

(d) Pursuing an active policy to promote opportunities of any and all citizens to find employment and sustainable livelihood;

(e) Ensuring equal access to economic opportunities and equal rewards for work of equal value;

(f) Participating in the development of global economy by taking responsibilities, coping with possible negative effects and sharing benefits;

(g) Promoting a legislative and regulatory framework designed to attract investments to accelerate economic development.

8. Enhance social cohesion and solidarity by:

(a) Developing and strengthening the democratic institutions to mediate tensions and maintain balance between the competing claims of diversity and uniformity, individuality and collectivity;

(b) Encouraging tripartite cooperation with respect to labour relations among government, trade unions and employer organizations;

(c) Promoting norms for ethical behaviour in the public life and establishing procedures to uphold and monitor it;

(d) Developing and strengthening formal and informal education dedicated to building local capacities for managing conflict and promoting mutual respect, tolerance and coexistence.

9. Develop further international cooperation in consolidating democratic institutions, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

United Nations A/54/179

General Assembly

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 24 of the provisional agenda*
Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Note verbale dated 22 July 1999 from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to enclose herewith a communiqué issued by the Mission on 22 July 1999 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations requests the Secretary-General to circulate the present note verbale and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under item 24 of the provisional agenda.

* A/54/150.

99-21896 (E) 300799

Annex

Communiqué issued by the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations on 22 July 1999

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations issues this communiqué in order to draw the attention of the States Members of the United Nations to the question of the return and restitution of the Korean cultural property plundered and destroyed by Japan in the past.

Cultural property of each country and nation is a national cultural heritage formed through a long history and it is a wealth of great value, reflecting a nation's resourcefulness, talent and cultural traditions.

Throughout their time-honoured history of 5,000 years, the Korean people have created and developed a resplendent national culture, holding dear cultural property created by their ancestors as symbols of national honour and pride.

Japan, from the first days of its aggression against Korea, especially during the nearly half a century-long period of its military occupation of and colonial rule over Korea from the early twentieth century, pillaged and destroyed a considerable amount of valuable cultural property, which the Korean people had handed down with utmost care generation after generation.

Japan unearthed old tombs, including those of ancient Korean Kings, and looted relics buried inside them.

The exhumation of the "King Kongmin's Tomb" by Japan in 1905 is a typical example. This tomb, located in Haeson-ri, Kaepung County of Kaesong City, was one of the exceptional tombs of the Kings of Koryo dynasty, providing valuable information for researching the stone construction and grave-making techniques in that era. There were numerous priceless relics inside the tomb.

The Japanese army and policemen blockaded surroundings of the tomb, dynamited its ceiling and took away 10 cartloads of relics for shipment to Japan. Using the same method, Japan severely destroyed about 2,000 ancient tombs of the Koryo era, including Kings' tombs, exclusively in the areas of Kaesong and Haeju, and plundered all relics from them during the period from 1904 to 1906.

Such open grave robbery became more naked during the period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea. Consequently, there no tomb was left with any relics, even among those old tombs throughout the countryside, which remained hardly recognizable at the end of the Japanese rule.

Furthermore, Japan pillaged at random various sorts of cultural property, such as world famous Koryo ceramics, antique documents, paintings and calligraphic works, Buddhist idols, pagodas and folk craft articles, all of which carried significant value from the academic and cultural perspectives.

Ito Hirobumi, the ringleader in fabricating the aggressive "Ulsa Five-Point Treaty" and the first "Resident-General of Korea" (1906–1909), pillaged a quantity of cultural property, including thousands of Koryo ceramics and large volumes of old books and documents, and sent them to Japan as "gifts" and so forth. Now on display at the Ueno Museum in Tokyo are hundreds of items of Korean cultural property, which he took to Japan at that time.

Terautsi Masadake, the first "Governor-General of Korea" (1910–1916), pulled down a building in the Kyongbok Palace for its rebuilding at his native place (Yamakutsi, Japan). Then he went as far as to hang out a signboard, "Korean House", there, in which he displayed two thousand relics including two stone-made Buddhist idols recognized as masterpieces not only in our country but also in the East, a small marble-made pagoda and ceramics and personal ornaments exhumed from old tombs of Koryo era around Kaesong. Moreover, in March 1914, he presented 1,800 volumes of "Lijosillok (a true record of the Li Dynasty)", the most precious national treasure of our country, to Professor Siradori of Tokyo Imperial University under the guise of a "transfer" from the "Government-General", to take them to Tokyo. They were burnt at the time of the Kanto Earthquake in 1923.

Okura Takenoske, who had been President of Taegu Electricity Corporation in Korea since 1911, took several thousand items of Korean cultural property to Japan over 30-odd years and organized the "Association for the Preservation of the Okura Collection" in 1958. This Association, dissolved in 1981, donated the 1,110 items of the "Okura Collection" to the National Museum in Tokyo, of which 1,030 items are Korean cultural property.

Still in store and on display at the National Museum in Tokyo are a large number of Korean cultural properties, including those relics unearthed in 1925 by the Tokyo Imperial University of Japan from such various old tombs as tomb No. 205 in Sokam-ri, Rakrang District of Pyongyang City (then Taedonggang-myon, Taedong County of South Phyongan Province).

Likewise, all the Japanese from leaders of the colonial rule to individuals, including petty officials, teachers, scholars and curio dealers under the patronage of government and military authority, ran amuck pillaging cultural property throughout Korea, as a result of which Korean cultural property items in Japan outnumber those in Korea, the country of their origin. This is a tragedy, indeed.

Japan also savagely destroyed cultural property such as monuments and buildings, which symbolize the national tradition of the Korean people and inspire their national consciousness.

In the early days of its forced occupation of Korea, Japan burned and destroyed numerous Buddhist temples in all areas of central and northern Korea, including the Sangwon Temple and the Ryongmun Temple in Mount Ryongmun in Kyonggi Province, alleging that those mountain temples were used as hiding-places of the Righteous Volunteers, who had risen up in their struggle to gain the independence of Korea.

In October 1910, the Japanese "Governor-General of Korea" mobilized military policemen and policemen to ransack bookstores, schools, archives and even private houses throughout the country, during which they forcibly seized and burned more than 200,000 books of 51 kinds, including valuable historical and geographical books, such as "Patriotism", authored by Li Chae Byong, and "General Uljimundok", by Sin Chae Ho.

To make matters worse, Japan indiscriminately destroyed castles, holy places and monuments such as the Pyongyang Walls, the Kaesong Castle and the Miracle Monument of the Monk Samyong at the Konbong Temple in Kosong County of Kangwon Province, which were imbued with our people's patriotic soul of national defence and signified the exploits of brilliant patriotic commanders.

Needless to say, the above-mentioned facts are only fragmentary, showing the plunder and destruction of cultural property committed by Japan in our country.

Japan's acts of pillaging and destroying Korean cultural property, which seriously hindered the cultural development of the Korean nation, constitute the crime of violating international laws on preservation and protection of cultural heritage.

At the same time, Japan's evasive behaviour concerning return of and restitution for the pillaged and destroyed cultural property is also a challenge to the demands of the international community and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

The question of protecting and preserving national cultural property has long been discussed as one of crucial issues at the international level, and several international treaties and conventions have been concluded in this field.

The United Nations General Assembly and several international conferences have also adopted resolutions and recommendations calling for strict preservation of cultural property of humankind and the return or restitution of illicitly appropriated cultural property to the countries of origin.

The adoption, in 1907, of The Hague Convention concerning Laws and Customs of War on Land is one of those examples. The Hague Convention stipulated the principles concerning the protection of cultural property in wartime. In particular, it provided that any country should prohibit the intentional seizure, destruction and degradation of historical monuments and objects of art and sciences in occupied territories.

The Convention concerning the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, adopted in 1970 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its 16th session, provided, in article 11, that the export and transfer of ownership of cultural property under compulsion arising directly or indirectly from the occupation of a country by a foreign power shall be regarded as illicit.

In this regard, the United Nations General Assembly, for nearly 30 years from its thirty-first session to fifty-second session, considered the issue of return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin as an important item on its agenda and adopted several resolutions urging all Member States to return illicitly appropriated cultural property of other nations to the countries of origin.

Japan should duly recognize the State responsibility and apologize to the Korean people for the pillaging and destruction of the Korean cultural property.

Further, it should return all cultural property pillaged from our country as early as possible and should compensate for its destruction, pursuant to United Nations resolutions on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin.

Japan's return and restitution of cultural property to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not an issue relating simply to the bilateral relations between the two countries, Korea and Japan. We also believe that this confirms the objectives of the United Nations to enhance international cooperation, preserve and develop global cultural values, and we urge the United Nations to pay due attention to the liquidation of Japan's past, including the return and restitution of cultural property.

United Nations A/54/180

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 26 of the provisional agenda*
Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 53/8 of 22 October 1998.

II. Consultations and exchanges of information

2. During the period under review, the secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States (LAS), as well as the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, continued to maintain close contact on matters of mutual concern to the two organizations.

3. On 10 and 11 December 1998, a meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations was convened by Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The meeting was a follow-up to the third high-level meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations convened by the Secretary-General on 28 and 29 July 1998 on the theme of "Cooperation for conflict prevention". Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Permanent Observer, represented the League of Arab States. The meeting reviewed recommendations of the third high-level meeting, developed practical modalities for cooperation in the field of early warning and conflict prevention and exchanged views on the implementation and follow-up process.

4. High-level contacts between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the League of Arab States included a meeting between the Commissioner-General and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations in New York, in November 1998. In March 1999, the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) paid an official visit to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the League offered the UNIDO representative in Cairo observer status at its meetings.

III. Follow-up action on proposals agreed to at general meetings between organizations of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States

5. A summary of the reports of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on their cooperation with the League of Arab States during the period under review is given below. It represents the follow-up action on proposals adopted at the meetings held between the United Nations and the League of Arab States at Vienna in 1995 (A/50/496) and Geneva in 1997 (A/52/378).

A. United Nations Secretariat

1. Department of Public Information

6. Programmes produced by the Radio and Central News Service covered the following topics: the status of the Middle East peace process, the situations in Iraq and Somalia and the Lockerbie case — including a statement issued by the League of Arab States welcoming the transfer of the two Libyan suspects in the bombing of Pan Am flight 103. It also conducted an interview with Esmat Abdel Maguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, which was broadcast in Egypt, Palestine, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and was also published in three Arabic international dailies. The United Nations Information Centre in Beirut, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, LAS and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, arranged several interviews during a regional meeting on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The information centres in Moscow, Cairo, Harare and Lagos organized seminars and other events to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

7. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has intensified cooperation with the Documentation and Information Centre of the League of Arab States in Cairo, ensuring that the Centre regularly receives United Nations materials.

2. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

8. A project, started up by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 1987, on the administrative development of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with in-kind contributions from the

League and a total budget of $2.5 million, was completed. The objective of the project was to strengthen the administration of the General Secretariat and to modernize its work procedures to increase its effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness to the objectives set forth in its charter.

9. The Department also carries out research and analysis in the area of population that is of substantive use to the work of the League. In addition to making reports and analyses available in hard copy, the League benefits from the Department's research findings via its electronic Web site (www.undp.org/popin).

B. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

10. Through its Regional Information Office for Arab States, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements participates as an observer in the ministerial sessions of the League. The League and the Centre have jointly organized regional conferences within the framework of implementing the Habitat Agenda. Jointly organized meetings include two in Cairo and one in Amman to draw a regional Arab strategy for the implementation of Habitat Agenda at the local, national and regional levels. The Strategy was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers for Housing and Reconstruction at its last meeting.

C. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

11. From 1998 to 1999, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) secretariat intensified its cooperation with the secretariat of LAS, as well as with its different member countries. This cooperation mainly focused on technical assistance activities. During the period under review, regular consultations between UNCTAD and the LAS secretariat took place. In November 1998, at the request of UNDP and the League, the UNCTAD secretariat participated in a joint mission to LAS headquarters in Cairo and identified two main priorities, one dealing with assistance for the establishment of the "Pan-Arab free trade area" and the other dealing with "Customs modernization and cooperation measures". The two proposals, submitted for funding to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, are still under consideration. UNCTAD has been designated to execute them in 1999.

12. Furthermore, the LAS secretariat has participated in various UNCTAD/UNDP seminars/workshops for Arab countries, including conferences on electronic commerce, trade and environment and competition policy, a symposium for Arab countries preparing them for the second World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference meeting of Arab experts on WTO issues, the first seminar on investment for Arab countries and a brainstorming meeting for Arab countries acceding to the World Trade Organization. In addition, UNCTAD was associated in the preparation and organization of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/LAS second Afro-Arab Business Week, held in Burkina Faso in October and November 1998, and the fourth Afro-Arab Trade Fair, held in Senegal in April 1999. Regular meetings took place between the delegation of LAS in Geneva and various substantive divisions of UNCTAD to study ways and means of intensifying this cooperation. It is expected that this cooperation will be reinforced shortly, provided that the necessary resources are available.

13. In the past year, UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) has made the following contributions to activities organized by the Arab Monetary Fund: on 21 and 22 February 1998, two lectures on "The impact of changes of the terms of trade and volumes on the trade balance" were given to a course on "Policies and management of the external sector" in Abu Dhabi. From 28 to 31 March 1998, presentations on "Effective debt management" and on DMFAS were made to a workshop on "Policies and management of public debt" in Abu Dhabi. Two DMFAS projects were also signed last year, one with Jordan and the other with Yemen.

14. In order to enhance the capacity of the LAS secretariat and its member States, an agreement is under preparation between LAS and UNCTAD providing that the two organizations would, within their respective mandates, conceptualize, develop and implement programmes of technical cooperation in the areas of trade facilitation, including customs modernization of intra-Arab, regional and international trade.

D. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

15. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which directly provides essential education, health care, relief assistance and social services to 3.6 million registered Palestine refugees, has long enjoyed a close cooperative relationship with the League of Arab States. The Agency maintains contact with the secretariat in Cairo and with the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States in New

York, participates in regular sectoral meetings organized by the League and seeks to foster cooperation between its officials and the LAS secretariat at various levels and in various fora. In the education sector, the eighth annual joint meeting between UNRWA and the LAS Council of Educational Affairs for the Children of Palestine was held in Cairo in December 1998 to review education services offered to Palestine refugees in the host countries and issues facing the UNRWA education programme.

16. UNRWA continued to benefit from the generous financial support of LAS and its continuing efforts to urge donors to increase voluntary contributions to the Agency. In 1998, member States of LAS contributed US$ 4.8 million in cash and in-kind to the Agency's regular budget and extrabudgetary special assistance programmes. In April 1999, the LAS Council of Ministers reaffirmed its resolution 4645 of 6 April 1987, which called on its member States to increase their contributions to the 1981 level of 7.73 per cent of the Agency's regular budget. UNRWA's critical financial situation and the role of the Agency were the subject of considerable discussion at LAS meetings during the period under review. The League reiterated its support for the Agency's humanitarian activities, concern over the repeated funding shortfalls faced by the Agency and their implications for Palestine refugees and the host authorities and the importance of increased contributions to the Agency by the international community.

E. United Nations Population Fund

17. LAS and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) efficiently cooperated in the context of the preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development plus Five review of the progress made towards achievement of the goals of the conference. In concert with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UNFPA and LAS participated in the preparation and conduct of the Arab Conference on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in Beirut from 22 to 25 September 1998. The conference was designed to conduct a review and evaluate the achievements of the Arab States in terms of implementation of the second Amman Declaration on Population and Development and to highlight the constraints faced in this connection, as well as to formulating a number of recommendations regarding future steps to be pursued in furtherance of the implementation process. Accordingly, a high-level meeting was held to discuss several topics of relevance to the Arab region. UNFPA and LAS also continued their cooperation in the area of data collection and analysis.

18. UNFPA support to LAS and its Population Research Unit has facilitated efforts to reinforce and consolidate the commitment of member States to the recommendations of the international conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, and to mobilize the necessary financial and human resources for the implementation of the respective national plans of action.

19. UNFPA and LAS are currently devising a joint collaboration under the forthcoming quadrennial inter-country programme of assistance.

20. As a basis for a region-wide data bank on demographic and reproductive health indicators, and under the auspices of the regional Pan Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), the results of the Morocco PAPCHILD survey were disseminated. The second and final phase of PAPCHILD began in 1993 and was co-sponsored by LAS, the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), with technical input from the United Nations. With the implementation of the Morocco study, the last of 10 surveys, this regional project was able to complement the basic maternal health and family planning modules with a new approach better suited to address the concepts emerging in the aftermath of the International Conference on Population and Development. The new approach aims at collecting data on an expanded range of reproductive health aspects, including those pertaining to knowledge about and behaviour relating to sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). PAPCHILD has, and continues, to provide input to policy development and evaluation for the countries in the region. To commemorate the completion of the PAPCHILD survey programme, a technical conference was held in June 1999, attended by scientists from all over the world, who submitted various papers related to the survey that will help advance the understanding of maternal and child health issues in the Arab region.

21. The Fund also participated this year in the finalization and approval of the Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) survey, proposed for 5 years, starting in 1999. This survey includes the conduct of demographic and reproductive health surveys in 16 countries as well as qualitative research studies in three selected countries. The

project is a multi-agency collaborative effort, which includes bilateral agencies and the private sector. Under the umbrella of LAS, the project is expected to generate a regional database characterized by comparability and the application of standardized methodologies.

F. United Nations International Drug Control Programme: Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

22. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, continued to maintain close cooperation and effective coordination in the drug control and crime prevention fields with LAS and its specialized institutions: namely, the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences. This included, in particular, reciprocal representation at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; meetings of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East; the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the annual meetings of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior (Tunis).

G. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

23. The Beirut Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cooperates with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and closely associates Arab institutions and technical expertise in projects undertaken in the Arab region. The UNESCO Cairo Office also cooperates with certain specialized organizations of LAS, namely ALECSO and the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD). During the period under review a number of meetings and workshops were co-sponsored by both organizations.

24. In cooperation with ACSAD, the UNESCO Cairo Office also organized a training course on the application of geographic information systems and databanks for studying the environment and social impacts in integrated water projects.

25. In the social sciences, the UNITWIN (project for twinning universities)/UNESCO chairs programme related to interdisciplinary studies and sustainable development joined with the Association of Partially or Wholly French-Language Universities to launch a post-graduate cours sustainable agriculture in the Mediterranean in Be UNESCO recently commissioned a feasibility stud expand the diploma to 3 to 4 more Arab countries o Mediterranean, through the creation of an inter-ac network programme. The UNITWIN Network of Fo Migration, chaired by the University of Oxford, compr network partners from several Palestinian universitie Jordan and universities in Morocco. The UNITWIN bo meeting (Jerusalem, 11–12 December 1998) approv project presented by the University of Casablanca-Ainch Morocco, to set up the first UNESCO Chair within network. Network members are frequently called upo provide expertise to their Governments. In addition to t training and research activities, they also run spe courses for government officials, refugee host commu leaders and to refugees themselves.

H. International Civil Aviation Organizati

26. The International Civil Aviation Organization (IC works closely with the Arab Civil Aviation Commis (ACAC). At the request of ACAC, ICAO prepared submitted, in March 1999, two technical coopera projects: the first concentrated on the planning implementation of communication, navigation surveillance/air traffic management systems in the A world, with a total budget of approximately US$ 500,(the second dealt with the restructuring of civil avia facilities in the Arab countries, at a total estimated co US$ 370,000. Both projects are presently under revie ACAC for funding and implementation. Members of were invited to the ICAO Statistics Workshop (Cairo August–2 September 1998). Moreover, under the mechan for financial, technical and material assistance to States regard to aviation security, a follow-up technical evalua mission was conducted in Morocco. Amman and Casabl are also the sites of regional and sub-regional ICAO trai centres in the field of security.

I. World Health Organization

27. Close collaboration continued between LAS and World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean, in Alexandria, in particular, with Council of Arab Ministers of Health. The Regional Dire participated in all the regular meetings of that council. technical units in the Regional Office also participated in numerous technical meetings organized by the Execu

Council where different technical topics were discussed and several technical reports prepared.

28. The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is also actively involved in the project on family and community health. The Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD) was completed and the Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) has begun.

29. Close collaboration is ongoing with the Arab Labour Organization in the provision of technical support to develop a database on occupational diseases and work accidents in member States. Cooperation also continued with regard to the environmental impact of industrial activity and on air quality guidelines. Working relations are ongoing through the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and two of its bodies: the Joint Committee of the Programme on Environmental Education, Information and Awareness in the Arab Countries and the Standing Committee on the Control of Industrial Pollution in the Arab Countries.

J. World Bank

30. Cooperation between the World Bank and LAS continued to be close and productive. In addition to participating in the periodic general meetings on cooperation between the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and LAS, the World Bank specifically cooperated with LAS in the following areas: provision of World Bank research papers and other reports and publications to LAS; periodic consultation between World Bank staff and LAS staff in the preparation work for the launching of the Arab Free Trade Zone initiative; continued collaboration between the World Bank and specialized agencies of LAS on important developmental and other sectoral issues; and participation by senior staff of LAS in a comprehensive course prepared by the World Bank on "Global integration and the new trade agenda", held in Washington in the summer of 1998.

K. Universal Postal Union

31. Cooperation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) is coordinated by the Arab Permanent Postal Commission (APPC), the successor to the Arab Postal Union. APPC comprises all the postal administrations of member countries of LAS. As part of its presence in the field, UPU created, in 1991, the post of Regional Adviser responsible for the Arab countries, based in Cairo, with responsibility for cooperating with the Restricted Postal Unions, particularly on defining regional technical assistance programmes; helping administrations to take the necessary steps to obtain funding for postal projects; identifying options for the financing of postal projects through international/bilateral funding sources; and helping administrations to implement the Seoul postal strategy, which defines the major actions to be undertaken nationally and regionally.

32. UPU regularly participates in meetings of APPC. LAS and APPC are also invited to take part in the work of the permanent bodies of UPU. At its 1995 meeting, the UPU Council of Administration approved the regional technical assistance priorities for the Arab countries for the period from 1996 to 2000. The programmes and projects were developed and implemented in close cooperation with APPC. As part of the implementation of these programmes, UPU has organized several specialized group training activities for the postal administrations of Arab countries. Moreover, as part of its technical cooperation programme for the period from 1996 to 2000, UPU is currently implementing 12 multi-year integrated projects for Arab countries.

L. International Telecommunication Union

33. During the period under review, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), through its Regional Office for the Arab States and Arab States Unit, maintained close cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Telecommunications Ministers of LAS. Apart from participating mutually in a number of meetings, task forces and seminars, ITU continues to cooperate with LAS in developing telecommunications in the Arab region and to coordinate its activities by reciprocal exchange of information.

M. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

34. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) actively cooperates with LAS specialized institutions, in particular the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) and ALECSO.

35. Given the industrial mandate of both UNIDO and AIDMO, the bulk of regional activities deployed by UNIDO in the Arab countries is implemented in cooperation with AIDMO as a specialized organization of the League. The following activities have been developed and implemented:

preparatory activities (in cooperation with AIDMO) related to a training workshop on project preparation and appraisal, including the application of the Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting (COMFAR) for selected Arab countries; project concepts prepared for the strengthening and capacity-building of AIDMO and the UNIDO Technological Information Exchange System (TIES); preparation of a project document on a "Networking programme for the Arab region, preparatory assistance in the establishment of effective national information networks and a regional Arab Business Network".

36. There was also an exchange of correspondence between UNIDO and LAS to review ways and means of promoting cooperation in environmental issues.

N. International Atomic Energy Agency

37. Most technical cooperation activities are carried out through national projects. There are, however also regional projects and activities in which member States in western Asia participate. Currently, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is jointly organizing, with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), a training course in Malaysia.

38. A regional basic professional training course on radiation, to be held in Damascus in the last quarter of 1999, is being organized in collaboration with the Arab Atomic Energy Agency.

IV. General meeting on cooperation between organizations of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States

39. As recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/8, the general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations took place at Vienna, from 7 to 9 July 1999.

40. Representatives of the following bodies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States participated in the meeting:

(a) United Nations system. Centre for International Crime Prevention, Department of Disarmament Affairs, Department of Political Affairs, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Bank.

(b) League of Arab States. League of Arab States secretariat, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), Arab Civil Aviation Commission (ACAC), Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Arab Labour Organization (ALO), Arab Academy for Science and Technology (AAST), Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID), Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA), Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior.

41. The Meeting was co-chaired by the Director, Deputy to the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Under Secretary-General for International Political Affairs of the League of Arab States. They represented the respective Secretaries-General of the two organizations. The meeting assessed the cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields as outlined in General Assembly resolution 53/8. Both organizations expressed the determination to further strengthen the existing cooperation.

42. The United Nations and LAS expressed their conviction that the welfare and prosperity of all nations of the world could only be achieved through the establishment and maintenance of peace and security in a world where many regions were plagued with turmoil, conflicts and civil and ethnic strife. Recognizing that the world was stepping into the twenty-first century with the burden of many unresolved conflicts and stalemated peace processes, the meeting stressed that those conflicts posed a threat to peace and drained the scarce resources of the world, which were urgently required for the development and prosperity of the human race.

43. Within the context of the maintenance of international peace and security, a number of regional issues were discussed, including those relating to the Middle East, Iraq and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Satisfaction was expressed with regard to the active cooperation between the United Nations and LAS regarding the situation in the Comoros and in the coordination of international and regional efforts to assist the Somali people in their search for peace.

44. Stressing the importance of tackling issues of mutual concern, the meeting realized the need to further and enhance the scope of their cooperation. It stressed the deep commitment of both the United Nations and LAS to pursuing conflict prevention as an effective means for the removal of threats to peace and that the process of preventing conflicts and disputes from escalating and crossing the threshold of violence into armed conflicts required, *inter alia*, the collective efforts and coordination of international and regional organizations in the areas of monitoring, early detection and warning of volatile situations that represented potential armed conflicts.

45. The United Nations and LAS, drawing on lessons learned from past experiences, stressed their belief that the cessation of violence did not necessarily provide real peace or ensure security. In order to build a firm foundation for real and enduring peace and security, it was essential to eliminate the root causes of conflict, be they of a political, ethnic, economic, social or other nature. Only then would it be possible to ease suffering, preserve dignity and provide justice for all.

46. The meeting took note of the ongoing efforts by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States to establish an "Arab Court of Justice" and to create a "Mechanism for conflict resolution through peaceful means" in the Arab world.

47. The meeting also acknowledged that, although the international community was committed to the concept of conflict prevention, there was not enough emphasis on the whole range of preventive action, that is, preventive diplomacy, preventive humanitarian action and preventive peace-building. With the focus on peacekeeping and conflict resolution, vast resources were directed towards efforts to resolve existing armed conflicts after they erupted, when it was already too late for many of the victims. Therefore, both organizations felt the need to enhance cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-building and to elaborate and develop mechanisms based on the 13 modalities that were proposed by the third high-level meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 28 and 29 July 1998.

48. The meeting also reviewed existing modalities of cooperation between the two political departments and noted with satisfaction the mechanisms and channels of communication that were established since the last general meeting in 1997. The existing mechanisms included focal points, information exchanges and consultations at policy and operational levels. It was also noted in that regard that focal points could be responsible for following-up on the implementation of any joint programmes, conducting direct informal contacts on activities and issues of common interest, investigating and exploring possibilities and means of exchanging information, consultations concerning early signs of potential crises and conflicts and holding periodic consultative meetings between staff at the working level to exchange views. The meeting saw merit in exploring the possibility of assisting LAS with its efforts at capacity-building in areas of disarmament, conflict prevention and dispute settlement.

49. The meeting stressed the importance of the role of regional efforts towards disarmament and noted that regional instability and insecurity were major causes for arms proliferation and arms races. The meeting confirmed that the initiatives of regional parties to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones were important contributions to non-proliferation, disarmament and international peace and security. The meeting recalled the consensus reached in the General Assembly since its thirty-fifth session that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security. For these reasons, the meeting acknowledged with satisfaction the progress made by LAS and its member States in elaborating a draft treaty. The meeting noted that the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was being called into question owing to the inability of the international community to guarantee universal adherence to it. It was further shaken by the decision of two non-signatories to conduct underground testing.

50. The meeting reiterated its concern that landmines were spreading in spite of the increasing efforts of the international community during the past few years. The United Nations and LAS stressed the multidimensional nature of the landmines problem with its humanitarian, economic, political and environmental ramifications, which posed major obstacles to the development of mine-infested countries, not to mention the devastating loss of thousands of lives. International assistance to deal with this problem was urgently needed. Stressing the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and expressing satisfaction over the growing number of countries acceding to the treaty, the meeting acknowledged the need to take the views and reservations expressed by many non-signatory States into serious consideration, in order to encourage them to become signatories to the treaty as a step towards its universal ratification. Within the aforementioned framework, the United Nations and LAS agreed to investigate prospects and possibilities of assisting LAS.

51. Having undertaken a thorough review of the progress achieved since the 1997 meeting at Geneva, the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and LAS and its institutions agreed to further consolidate and strengthen cooperation in the following areas: environment; agricultural and rural development; industry; energy; transport; telecommunications; human settlements; trade; labour, employment and human resources; social development; population, health and reproductive health; education, culture and science; drug control and crime prevention; refugees; and information and technology.

52. In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly that inter-agency sectoral meetings should be organized regularly on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of Arab States, the United Nations and LAS agreed that the next sectoral meeting would be held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut in the year 2000 on the subject of youth and employment. LAS also proposed that another meeting be held in 2000 on cooperation challenges presented by the advent of the third millennium.

53. The items on the agenda of the general meeting were considered by working groups composed of representatives of the departments, organizations and agencies concerned. Proposals and recommendations emanating from the discussions, as well as those contained in the working papers, were incorporated in the final document adopted by the general meeting at its closing session. The final document was transmitted by the Secretariat to all the participating agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in July 1999.

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 89 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/53 of 3 December 1998, paragraph 8 of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly,*
>
> "...
>
> "8. *Requests* the Secretary-General:
>
> "(a) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate the Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;
>
> "(b) To continue to make available such additional staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;
>
> "(c) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 6 above;
>
> "(d) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;
>
> "(e) To report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution."

* A/54/150.

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2. All necessary facilities were provided to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. Arrangements were made for the Committee to meet in March, May and August 1999. Furthermore, the Special Committee carried out a field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic in May 1999. Periodic reports and the thirty-first report of the Special Committee will be circulated to Member States.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 53/53, the Department of Public Information undertook the following activities:

(a) The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of the meetings of the Special Committee. Extensive press and audio-visual coverage was also provided for the meetings of the Commission on Human Rights. The methods used by the Department to provide this coverage included production of press releases, publications, television news packages and radio programmes and the organization of press briefings and briefings for the public.

(b) The Department continued to disseminate United Nations information materials, documents and press releases on the activities of the Special Committee and the Commission on Human Rights through the global network of United Nations information centres and services in 67 countries, the 357 depository libraries in 142 countries and through the Internet. The Department also continued to make information materials available to non-governmental organizations through its Resource Centres in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

(c) The Department, through its information centres, provided support to the Special Committee's field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 18 to 29 May 1999.

4. It should be also noted that, on 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to all States drawing attention to resolutions 53/53, 53/54, 53/55, 53/56 and 53/57 of 3 December 1998.

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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/54 of 3 December 1998, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
>
> "2. *Demands* that Israel accept the *de jure* applicability of the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and that it comply scrupulously with the provisions of the Convention;
>
> "3. *Calls upon* all States parties to the Convention, in accordance with article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, to exert all efforts in order to ensure respect for its provisions by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
>
> "4. *Reiterates* the need for speedy implementation of the recommendation contained in its resolutions ES-10/3 of 15 July 1997, ES-10/4 of 13 November 1997 and ES-10/5 of 17 March 1998 with regard to the convening of a conference of the high contracting parties to the Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in

* A/54/150.

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the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to ensure its respect in accordance with common article 1;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of all States parties to the Convention to paragraph 3 of resolution 53/54.

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 89 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/55 of 3 December 1998, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal and an obstacle to peace and economic and social development;
>
> "2. *Calls upon* Israel to accept the *de jure* applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to the occupied Syrian Golan and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Convention, in particular article 49;
>
> "3. *Demands* complete cessation of the construction of the new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim and of all Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
>
> "4. *Stresses* the need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, in which, among other things, the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to take and implement measures, including, *inter alia*, confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence

* A/54/150.

99-22463 (E) 060899

by Israeli settlers, and called for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

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Fifty-fourth session
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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/57 of 3 December 1998, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly,*
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council, *inter alia*, decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, should rescind forthwith its decision;
>
> "2. *Also calls upon* Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements;
>
> "3. *Determines* that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and have no legal effect;

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"4. *Calls upon* Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, and to desist from its repressive measures against the population of the occupied Syrian Golan;

"5. *Deplores* the violations by Israel of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;

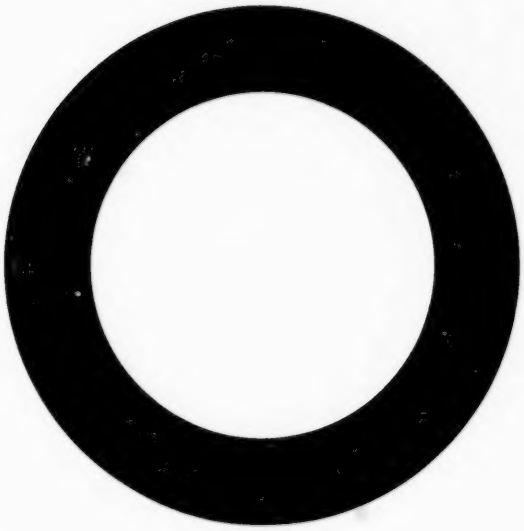
"6. *Calls once again upon* Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to above;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of all States parties to the Convention to paragraph 6 of resolution 53/57.



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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/56 of 3 December 1998, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly,*
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Determines* that all measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, are illegal and have no validity and that such measures should cease immediately;
>
> "2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all practices and actions which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people;
>
> "3. *Stresses* the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all of the occupied Palestinian territory and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including the removal of restrictions on movement into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world;

* A/54/150.

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"4. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to accelerate the release of all remaining Palestinians arbitrarily detained or imprisoned, in line with agreements reached;

"5. *Calls* for complete respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of all fundamental freedoms of the Palestinian people, pending the extension of the self-government arrangements to the rest of the occupied territory;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 June 1999, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

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General Assembly

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Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Item 109 of the provisional agenda*
International drug control

Report on the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and on resolution 53/115 of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the implementation of the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. It covers the action plans and measures adopted and presents the activities already undertaken, as well as those envisaged, by UNDCP to meet the new mandates that the General Assembly has vested in the United Nations in the field of drug control.

* A/54/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/115, entitled "International cooperation against the world drug problem", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the outcome of its twentieth special session and of resolution 53/115. The present document has been prepared in response to that request.

II. Revised medium-term plan for international drug control, 1998–2001

2. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in New York from 8 to 10 June 1998, represented a major landmark in international efforts to achieve a drug-free world. It formulated a global strategy based on a balanced approach, with demand reduction and supply reduction as mutually reinforcing elements. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is engaged in the follow-up work. The new commitments undertaken by Governments have expanded the mandates and responsibilities entrusted to UNDCP, which are reflected in the approved revised medium-term plan for international drug control for 1998–2001. Successful implementation of the budgetary implications is essential if the international community is to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the special session.

III. Designation of the twentieth special session as a major global conference

3. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) decided to designate the twentieth special session of the General Assembly as a major United Nations conference, citing drug control as a major cross-cutting priority for the United Nations system. Monitoring the implementation of the follow-up to the special session will thus become part of the United Nations review of the follow-up to major conferences by ACC and its subsidiary machinery and will be included in the intergovernmental coordination and follow-up processes. This will provide additional support to the implementation of the action plans and measures adopted at the twentieth special session to further international cooperation on drug control. This approach is also spelled out in draft resolution I adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-second session for the approval of the Council, entitled: "Review of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme: strengthening the United Nations machinery for international drug control within the scope of the existing international drug control treaties and in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations".[1] By that resolution the Council would recommend that member States report on the implementation of measures arising from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, in line with the Political Declaration adopted at that session.[2] In that regard they should consider the world drug problem to be a cross-cutting issue in the context of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summit meetings.

IV. Action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction

4. The General Assembly at its twentieth special session adopted the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction,[3] highlighting the importance of demand reduction as an indispensable pillar in countering the world drug problem. UNDCP is supporting Governments in developing action-oriented demand reduction programmes, in keeping with their commitments to have new and enhanced strategies in place by 2003 and to achieve measurable results by 2008.

5. In its resolution 53/115, section II, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to examine, at its forty-second session, the proposal for an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which was being elaborated by UNDCP in consultation with Member States, taking into account the international agreements and declarations in the area of demand reduction that had been elaborated, in particular the Global Programme of Action,[4] and addressing all policies and programmes to all sectors of society. In December 1998 and March 1999, UNDCP convened two meetings of a high-level intergovernmental working group to elaborate an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration. At its forty-second session the Commission considered the report of the intergovernmental working group and formulated the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the

Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which is contained in the draft resolution which it transmitted,[1] through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly for adoption at its fifty-fourth session.

6. An important precondition for achieving the targets adopted at the twentieth special session is that Governments have reliable information on the nature of, and patterns and trends in, drug abuse. To achieve that objective, UNDCP launched a new initiative to assist Governments in establishing an epidemiological infrastructure, through training and scientific advice provided by a regional network of epidemiological advisers and research institutes. The objective is to ensure that demand reduction programmes are based on a regular assessment of the nature and magnitude of drug abuse and related problems, in order to develop a database that includes best practices in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. To contribute to the effort, UNDCP published guidelines on the development and implementation of rapid situation assessment of drug abuse and responses thereto, field-tested in more than 12 countries worldwide.

7. In resolution 53/115, section II, the Assembly took note with satisfaction of the active participation of youth organizations and youth during the special session, and stressed the importance of their continuing to contribute their experiences and to participate in the decision-making processes, in particular in relation to the elaboration of the action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. UNDCP built on the commitment of young people for a drug-free society at the third World Youth Forum of the United Nations system, held in Braga, Portugal, from 2 to 7 August 1998, and the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, held at Lisbon from 8 to 12 August 1998. In the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, adopted at the Conference, Governments pledged to raise awareness of drug abuse by working in partnership with young people and mobilizing communities to adopt healthy lifestyles.

V. Elimination of illicit cultivation of the opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis through alternative development

8. At its twentieth special session, in resolution S-20/4 E, entitled "Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development", the General Assembly made an historical commitment to eliminate or significantly reduce illicit cultivation of the opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis by the year 2008. UNDCP is playing a catalytic role in providing the strategy for achieving this goal, in close cooperation with national and international partners and international financial institutions engaged in poverty eradication, health and education to improve the overall quality of life in areas affected by illicit cultivation of narcotic crops, thereby reducing incentives for the cultivation of illicit crops.

9. In its resolution 53/115, section II, the Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNDCP to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-second session, on the follow-up to the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development. A report of the Executive Director on that subject (E/CN.7/1999/3) was before the Commission in March 1999.

10. To support Governments in meeting the goals of the Action Plan, UNDCP initiated a process of formulating national "business plans", in consultation with interested Governments, based on the field experience acquired during the past decade in the eradication of illicit crops and alternative development in the Andean region and in South-East and South-West Asia. As a direct follow-up to the Action Plan, UNDCP prepared, with the Governments of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, business plans, conceived as programming tools for the implementation of national strategies to reduce significantly or eliminate illicit cultivation of drug crops through alternative development within a specified time-frame. Similar alternative development programmes for Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam were at various stages of elaboration.

11. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) offered invaluable support to the Government of Peru by providing loans for roads, energy and related infrastructure works which are essential for effective and sustainable alternative development projects. A consultative group meeting in Peru, in support of drug control, was held in Brussels in November 1998, organized in collaboration with UNDCP, the European Commission, IDB, and the Organization of American States. A similar event, to include the same sponsors, plus Spain and the World Bank, will be held in June 1999 in Paris to support the business plan for the Government of Bolivia. The business plan for Colombia stresses the need for close interaction between alternative development and the peace process.

12. In October 1998, UNDCP initiated the process of developing a programme framework for cooperation in drug control in South-East Asia, covering the region of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The regional approach is governed by the Action Plan and the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, and takes into account the goals of national plans and strategies. The strategy for South-East Asia, covering Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, the ASEAN secretariat and the Asian Development Bank, aims at a 40 per cent reduction in the illicit production of dry opium, provided that the conditions and donor support exist to implement expanded alternative development programmes in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

13. The UNDCP strategy for the region of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) (including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) provides an efficient and cost-effective framework for UNDCP activities, both inside Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. The programme framework covers the first five years (from 1999 to 2003) of the Action Plan and envisages a 30 per cent reduction in illicit cultivation of dry opium, provided that conditions and donor support exist to implement alternative development initiatives under the common programme in Afghanistan. The common programming process for Afghanistan provides an opportunity for UNDCP to insert the drug dimension as a shared principle into programmes of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations and into bilateral programmes when they start operating in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, UNDCP supported the Government's enforcement of the poppy ban which led to the destruction of 125 hectares of opium poppy in May 1998, out of an estimated 500 hectares under cultivation. UNDCP embarked upon the preparation of a strategy for the consolidation phase which envisages further assistance from other agencies, once poppy production is eliminated in the Dir district.

14. At its twentieth special session, the Assembly called on Member States to design monitoring and verification mechanisms for illicit cultivation and to collaborate and exchange information with UNDCP and other Governments. UNDCP has started to conduct assessments and analyses to provide Governments with an independent, neutral and objective source of information for measuring the extent of illicit cultivation and for monitoring efforts to ensure its reduction and eventual elimination. UNDCP has prepared a programme for the establishment of a global monitoring system to support States, at their request, in measuring the extent of illicit cultivation, using appropriate survey methodologies, combining ground and aerial surveys and satellite monitoring. To that effect UNDCP signed an agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) in April 1999, defining the main features of a cooperation agreement under which ESA would provide its expertise and technical capacity to UNDCP for the development of the methodology. In November 1998, UNDCP initiated a support project for the establishment of a small programme development team to be responsible for the development of survey methodologies, to participate in country-level needs assessment missions, and to contribute to the formulation of technical assistance projects.

15. At its forty-second session the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 42/3, entitled: "Monitoring and verification of illicit cultivation", endorsing the strategy of UNDCP. In that resolution the Commission requested, *inter alia*, that UNDCP collaborate with Governments, through an agreement setting out guidelines for the collection and dissemination of information, and with relevant governmental, intergovernmental, regional and technical organizations in establishing an international network for monitoring the cultivation of illicit crops. UNDCP was also requested, within the limits of available resources, to establish a central data bank and information system on the basis of information furnished by Governments on the cultivation of illicit crops and to report annually to the Commission on the current world situation regarding illicit crops and on the impact of strategies developed by Governments for their elimination and substitution. Finally, UNDCP was requested to provide requesting Governments with the technical assistance that they required and to take steps to mobilize international logistical and financial support with a view to establishing national mechanisms for monitoring and verifying the cultivation of illicit crops used in the production of drugs and developing an international network for the control of illicit cultivation for the purpose of implementing the Action Plan.

VI. Measures to promote judicial cooperation

16. The measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, in resolutions S-20/4 A–E, focus on the action that States should take fully to implement the Convention against Illicit Traffic in

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1998[5] and to promote judicial cooperation, which complements and extends the cooperation envisaged in that Convention. States were encouraged to review and, where appropriate, to strengthen by the year 2003 the implementation of the measures to promote judicial cooperation outlined in resolution S-20/4 C, which included extradition, mutual legal assistance and the transfer of proceedings.

17. UNDCP, through its legal advisory programme, assisted Governments in the adoption and implementation of legislation to give effect to the provisions of the international drug control treaties, particularly the provisions of the 1988 Convention on mutual legal assistance, extradition, transfer of proceedings, and related treaty provisions. UNDCP is assisting States in implementing the recommendations that call upon States to foster an exchange of information on their laws, practices and procedures among their judicial and law enforcement authorities. Training and technical cooperation for judicial, prosecutorial and law enforcement personnel supported or conducted by UNDCP has enhanced the expertise and capacity of Governments, resulting in the arrest, prosecution and conviction of drug traffickers.

VII. Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors

18. In General Assembly resolution S-20/4 A, entitled "Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors", it is stated that the subject of amphetamine-type stimulants should be given higher priority and should become a regular item on the agenda of the Commission. States should disseminate information on actions taken in fulfilment of the Action Plan and report on them to the Commission, which, in turn, should review and appraise implementation of the Action Plan at the national, regional and international levels.

19. The Assembly called for the establishment or strengthening by the year 2003 of national legislation and programmes giving effect to the Action Plan. To that effect UNDCP enhanced its efforts to support Member States, the Commission, and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), in strengthening their efforts to address the global problem of trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly through research and technical cooperation programmes. To respond to the global spread and diversification of the clandestine manufacture and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, a consultative meeting held in Tokyo in March 1998 discussed and reviewed current methods for the characterization and profiling of methamphetamine and other amphetamine-type stimulants and made recommendations for future work in that area. As a follow-up UNDCP prepared a draft outline for fellowship programmes in drug impurity profiling. A consultative meeting was also held in London in September 1998 to review methods for the identification and analysis of amphetamine-type stimulants and their analogues in seized material. Another initiative is to assist Governments in the region of South-East Asia in countering the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors. The World Health Organization (WHO) has agreed to undertake research on the health effects of such stimulants, particularly methylenedioxymethamphetamine (commonly known as Ecstasy).

20. UNDCP, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, the regional office of WHO for the Americas) and INCB jointly organized a meeting, held in Santiago from 21 to 23 July 1998, on the consumption of amphetamine-type stimulants used as anorectics in Latin America. The meeting addressed the issue of the high consumption of stimulants as anorectics in countries in the southern cone of Latin America, their abuse, the emergence of an illicit market and the effectiveness of measures adopted by Governments.

VIII. Control of precursors

21. Measures to prevent the illicit manufacture, import, export, trafficking, distribution and diversion of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, presented in General Assembly resolution S-20/4 B, will facilitate the implementation of article 12 (regarding precursors) of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic. The measures extend the provisions of that article. Since INCB presents each year a report to the Commission on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention, the Commission will in future consider the implementation of the measures on precursors under the same agenda item under which it considers the implementation of article 12. This would avoid duplication and facilitate reporting by Governments.

22. UNDCP worked in close consultation with INCB on precursor control projects in South-East Asia and in Central, South and South-West Asia, to help set up control and

cooperation mechanisms at the regional level. In this regard, UNDCP and INCB jointly organized the Precursor Control Legislative Awareness Regional Conference, held in Colombo in July 1998, as part of the UNDCP regional project on precursor control for South and South-West Asia. The meeting raised awareness of precursors and promoted the updating and harmonization of related laws and regulations. UNDCP technical assistance programmes in the field of precursor control have increased the knowledge available to the Board on the latest trends in the trafficking of precursors chemicals.

IX. Countering money-laundering

23. In the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session in resolution S-20/2, Governments committed themselves to adopting, by the year 2003, national money-laundering legislation and programmes in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1988 Convention, as well as the measures for countering money-laundering adopted in resolution S-20/4 D. On the occasion of the special session, a study entitled "Financial heavens, banking secrecy and money-laundering", providing a comprehensive analysis of the problems caused by the laundering of criminal proceeds in the offshore financial sector, was published by UNDCP. As a follow-up, the Offshore Initiative, a United Nations global initiative to prevent the misuse of the offshore financial sector for the laundering of criminal proceeds, was launched. Its wider objectives are to prevent the laundering of criminal proceeds through financial channels, to improve transparency in international financial transactions and to stimulate international cooperation in criminal matters involving offshore financial centres.

24. Special efforts were undertaken to assist States in improving the efficiency of financial investigations. A training manual for financial investigators was prepared, and a programme of cooperation in setting up financial investigation services was initiated with Barbados and Jamaica. A global inventory of ongoing technical cooperation in anti-money-laundering activities was established, following coordination meetings held at Vienna in September 1998. The inventory will make it possible to form a better picture of potential overlapping, gaps and loopholes in the provision of technical assistance to counter money-laundering.

25. In 1998, awareness-raising and training workshops were held in New Delhi, for South Asian States, and in Buenos Aires and La Paz, for States members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR). Missions were carried out in the Cayman Islands, Colombia, Guatemala and Panama. In cooperation with the UNDCP legal advisory programme, money-laundering issues were covered in training workshops for justice officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Senegal and Slovakia. Support was provided to the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering in the organization of a workshop on money-laundering for States of that region.

26. UNDCP is offering States that have not yet adopted the required legislative provisions and implementation measures assistance through the global programme against money-laundering of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. A series of regional legal drafting workshops will be organized with the objective of providing guidance on the elaboration of legislation against money-laundering and the harmonization of provisions of such legislation. Assistance is also provided through the training of banking, law enforcement and judicial authorities to enhance the capacity of States effectively to implement domestic legislation against money-laundering.

X. Mobilization of the Commission to fulfil its mandates

27. In paragraph 20 of the Political Declaration adopted at its twentieth special session,[2] the General Assembly called upon all States to report biennially to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on their efforts to meet the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008 agreed at the twentieth special session and requested the Commission to analyse those reports in order to enhance the cooperative effort to combat the world drug problem.

28. In resolution 53/115, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNDCP to elaborate guidelines in order to facilitate reporting by Governments on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action adopted by the Assembly at its seventeenth special session[4] and on progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008, as set out in the Political Declaration. The objective was to have an efficient collection of reliable data, increase the number of Governments that reported updated information on a regular basis, improve the quality of their responses, and avoid duplication of activities.

29. For its consideration of this issue at its forty-second session in March 1999, the Commission had before it two notes by the Secretariat, entitled "Guidelines for reporting

on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and on the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly" (E/CN.7/1999/2) and "Implementation of the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session" (E/CN.7/1999/4). The Commission noted the broad overlap between the provisions of the Global Programme of Action and the Action Plans and measures adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session. In order to rationalize the reporting requirements on the part of both Governments and the Secretariat and avoid duplication, the Commission decided that, in future, the annual report of the Secretary-General on activities undertaken by UNDCP and Governments relating to the Global Programme of Action should be integrated with the report on progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008, as set out in the Political Declaration. The Commission, pursuant to its resolution 42/4, decided to establish an inter-sessional working group, within available resources, open to all States, to elaborate guidelines in order to facilitate reporting by Governments on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and on progress made in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008, as set out in the Political Declaration. The inter-sessional working group met from 1 to 3 June and is expected to hold a second meeting in October 1999 and to submit unified draft guidelines for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its reconvened forty-second session in December 1999.

30. UNDCP, in its capacity as secretariat to the Commission, will continue to play an active role in the implementation of the strategy adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, providing support to Governments through a portfolio of technical assistance in attaining the agreed goals within the given time-frames.

Notes

[1] See E/1999/28–E/CN.7/1999/15, chap. I (to be issued subsequently as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 8*).

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Special Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/S-20/14), sect. III, resolution S-20/2, annex.

[3] Ibid., resolution S-20/3, annex.

[4] See resolution S-17/2, annex.

[5] See *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November–20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).